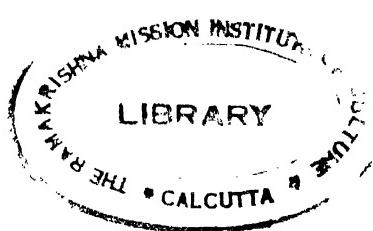


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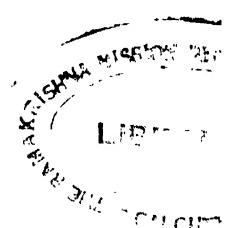
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Let me tell you, strength is what we want, and the first step in getting strength is to uphold the Upanishads and believe that "I am the Atman."

—Swami Vivekananda

THE VEDANTA KESARI

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NOVEMBER, 1935

[No. 7

HINDU ETHICS

॥ ॐ ॥

अद्वैतः सर्वभूतेषु कर्मणा मनसा गिरा ।
इ दुग्धहश दानं च शीलमेतत् प्रशस्यने ॥
यदन्येषां हितं न स्थादात्मनः कर्म पौरुषम् ।
अपचरेष्ट वा येन न सत् कुर्यात् कर्यन्वन ॥
ततु कर्म तया कुर्यात् येन भूष्येन संसदि ।
शीलं गगागेनैनने कर्यितं गुरुसत्तम ॥
यद्यावशीला गृह्णने प्राप्नुवन्ति श्रियं कर्वन् ।
न भूक्ते चिरं तात गम्भीरा श्रीनन्दि न ॥

Absence of malice towards any being in act, thought and word, loving-kindness and liberality constitute noble conduct.

That human effort which does not conduce to the good of others or that act of which one has to be ashamed should not be done on any score.

On the other hand that act for which one may be lauded in society should be done. O, Noble King ! I have told you briefly what conduct is.

If wicked persons, O King, ever come by wealth they do not enjoy it long. O, Son, a total fall awaits them.

SANTI PARVA, CH. 124, VERSES 65—68.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA THE GREAT MASTER

By Swami Saradananda

[In this instalment of Sri Ramakrishna the Great Master, we get an idea of the intimacy that a devotee feels towards the Deity and of the extraordinary power that the Master exercised on the thoughts of men.]

The last day of the festival

THE three days of the festival, viz., the seventh, the eighth and the ninth day of the bright fortnight, had been spent in great rejoicing. Now it was the morning of the tenth day. The priest was hurrying through the regular worship in a summary way, as the worship had to be concluded within an appointed time. Finally, the immersion of the image would take place in the evening. A shadow of grief had darkened the minds of the entire household of Mathuranath. Everyone felt a sort of want, indistinct and indistinguishable, something like the premonition of an imminent and unavoidable separation from some dearest object. Even the purest joys of this world are thus followed invariably by a gloomy shade like this. It is perhaps in accordance with this rule that even the greatest lovers of God occasionally come across intolerable pangs of separation from God. Even hard-hearted persons like us cannot help shedding tears of grief during the immersion of the sacred image on the last day of worship. It is needless to mention that from the earliest hours of the day Mathuranath's wife was again and again wiping off tears from her eyes

while closely engaged in her round of duties.

Due to intense joy Mathuranath remains unaware of the end of the festival

But Mathuranath had not yet been able to conceive that the last day of the festivity had arrived. He was still beside himself with joy as before, because of the holy presence of the Divine Mother in his house and also because of the inconceivable grace and extraordinarily pure association of the Father. Engrossed as he was in his own delights, there was hardly any need of attending to what was happening in the outside world. He thought his days would glide on blissfully for ever in the company of the Father and in the presence of the Divine Mother. But meanwhile came the message from the priest that the immersion of the mirror (signifying the conclusion of the ceremony and the termination of the divine presence in the holy image) was to take place now. Therefore Mathuranath was requested to come to the worship hall to pay his last homage to the Deity in the image.

Mathuranath is determined not to allow the immersion of the image

At first Mathuranath could not at all understand what was said to

him. Only when the same thing was repeated for a second time did he come to know that it was the final day, and simultaneously with it he felt a severe wound in his heart. With extreme mortification he began to shed copious tears while thoughts of this nature agitated his mind: "Must the Mother, (*i.e.*, the image) be immersed to-day? But why? Through Her grace I am not in need of anything whatever. As for the little want of mental peace, that too has been completely removed by the Mother's presence in my house. Why should I then be made miserable again by the immersion of the Mother? Never! For heaven's sake I cannot allow the breaking up of this joyous fair. The immersion of the Mother! Even the very thought makes life intolerable."

Meanwhile the auspicious moment was about to pass by. The priest was sending messengers one after another with his request for the Master's presence for a while in the worship hall during the immersion ceremony whereupon Mathuranath sent him the reply with great annoyance, "I won't allow the immersion of the Mother to take place. The worship shall be continued as before. If the immersion takes place against my will, it will mean a terrible disaster,—even loss of lives may be the ultimate result." With this he remained motionless in a gloomy mood. Seeing the grim attitude of the master, the servant moved aside with fear, and returning to the worship hall he reported everything to the priest.

Everyone was overwhelmed with surprise.

Mathuranath's reply to the persuasions of the household

Then after much deliberation the members of the household sent such persons as were held in respect by Mathuranath to persuade him to agree to the usual procedure on such occasions. They too went and tried to change his mind, but absolutely to no effect. Without paying any heed to these persuasions he said, "Why? I shall worship the Mother every day. Why should I immerse Her when I have got enough means for Her daily worship through Her grace?" What else could the elders now do but return with a sad countenance, concluding that he had gone crazy? But what if so? Every member of the house knew only too well how wreckless Mathuranath could be and how completely he would lose all power of discrimination in a fit of anger. Therefore none dared to fall into his disfavour by giving orders for the immersion. The news reached the mistress of the house in a sufficiently exaggerated form. Being terror-stricken, she requested the Master to try to bring him round. For, who else was there to save them from danger?

The Master convinces Mathuranath

As soon as the Master stepped into Mathuranath's room he found the latter pacing about there, wholly indifferent towards his surroundings, with his countenance sombre

and flushed red, and the eyes turned deep red. The moment he saw the Master, he came near him and said, "Well, Father, let people say whatever they like. I cannot allow the immersion of the Mother as long as I live. I have told them that I shall continue the worship daily. Or else, how am I to live separated from the Mother?"

"Is this your only fear?" replied the Master, gently passing his hand over Mathuranath's chest. "But who told you that you were to live separated from the Mother? Moreover, where will She go even though the immersion takes place? Can the Mother live away from her child? She has accepted your offerings for these three days, being present outside, in the worship hall. From to-day She will be still closer to you, residing constantly within your heart and accepting your offerings therefrom."

Marvellous power of the Master's words and his touch

The Master's words and touch possessed the power of creating extraordinary transformations in the minds of men. It was noticed, time and again, that when people would not accept his views on any particular subject but opposed him obstinately with contrary arguments, the Master used to touch them on some pretext or other. Simultaneously with this, the course of thought in the persons thus touched would undergo a complete reversal, and they used to wind up the topic wholly agreeing with

the Master's position. About this matter the Master himself also told some of us, "Do you know why I touch the opponents in that way in the course of a debate? It weakens the power which creates that sort of doggedness in them, and thereby they are enabled to grasp the real truth."

We had heard of, and personally witnessed also, many an instance in the Master's life when he would absorb into himself, wholly or partly, such powers from other people as stood in the way of their realising the actual truth. It had been noticed that certain words, when they came from an ordinary man, fell flat on the audience, while those very words, when coming from the Master's lips, would penetrate to the very core of the hearers' hearts, so as to bring about a thorough transformation in their later lives. We shall attempt elsewhere to present our readers with these in their elaborate detail. At present let us proceed with the story of Mathuranath.

How Mathuranath came round again

Gradually Mathuranath came round as a consequence of the Master's words and his touch. Whether this change was due to some spiritual vision, attained through the Master's will and touch, we do not know. But that alone seems quite probable. Perhaps he perceived the vivid presence of the Divine Mother within his heart brightening it up with heavenly light, which increased his delight hundred-fold and thereby

weakened his craving for preserving the external image. A true Guru thus draws the attention of the disciple to the brilliant lustre

of a higher ideal, and in consequence the ecstasies and experiences of a lower order automatically disappear from his mind.

THE MODERN MYSTICS

[In the following paragraphs we place before our readers some of the important generalisations arrived at by Sir Francis Younghusband in his recently published book "The Modern Mystics." Sir Francis was an officer under the Government of India for a long time, and is a great admirer of Indian thought and spiritual ideals. He is also the author of several interesting books.

The Religious Outlook To-day

THIS modern age is generally represented as an era noted for the decline of popular interest in religion. It is however an undeniable fact that in spite of this general waning of religious zeal, the last two or three decades have witnessed the publication of a much larger number of thoughtful books on religion than many an era noted for its religious enthusiasm. It would seem from this that what the modern mind rejects is that type of dogmatic religion which seeks to enforce its teachings by the bribe of heaven or the threat of hell, which pretends to be cock-sure about all facts, secular and spiritual, and which threatens to plunge its priestly talons into the body of society with a view to prevent men from freely exercising their mental and intellectual powers. In fact religion as a means for enriching life, as a factor that can give more of peace, bliss and illumination to the mind is occupying the attention of many talented men to-day. This interest in religion as life, as distin-

guished from religion as dogma, is at the back of much of the modern craze for applied philosophy, auto-suggestion, spiritual healing and similar methods of mental training. For the same reason spiritual aspirants of to-day seek inspiration more from mystical writings and the lives and experiences of saints than from dogmatic theology and hair-splitting philosophical discussions.

We surmise that this tendency of modern religious thought is the impelling force behind a recent publication entitled "Modern Mystics" by Sir Francis Younghusband, one of the most cultured and liberal-minded Englishmen of to-day. There are many excellent books by European writers on mysticism; but the unfortunate obsession of the western mind that human culture is co-extensive with western culture has made most of these writers oblivious of the great mystical traditions of Asiatic religions, and thus confine their attention to the mysticism of the West alone. Sir Francis on the other hand presents to his readers

a study of modern mystics selected from all countries and all religions —from India and Persia ; from France, England and Wales ; from among Hindus, Muslims and Christians. The mystics treated in the book are Keshub Chander Sen, Ramakrishna and Vivekananda as representatives of Hindu Mysticism ; the Bab and his followers from among Muslim mystics ; St. Therese de Lisieux, better known as the Little Flower, as exemplifying Roman Catholic mysticism ; the unknown authoress of *The Golden Fountain*, as a typical Protestant mystic ; and Evan Roberts, a Welsh mystic, as an example of mass mysticism. This comparative outlook of Sir Francis, born of his freedom from any commitment to the exclusive creeds of any church, entitles his generalisations on mysticism to a careful study on the part of all who are interested in the development of that inner vision which alone can give a true insight into the heart of Reality. We shall therefore attempt to place before our readers some of his important conclusions embodied in this book, and add our own reflections on them wherever necessary.

Points of Agreement and Difference.

The first point that deserves our attention in a comparative study of this kind is the points of resemblance and difference that Sir Francis deduces from a close consideration of the lives and experiences of these saints. In earnestness of purpose, in yearning after perfection, in

suffering, in subsequent joy, in serenity of soul, in certitude of goodness, in the longing to communicate their joy to others and in the feeling of fellowship with all—the author finds complete agreement among the mystics of his study. But the ways they followed differed. Some had visions, some heard voices, some saw lights, and some were borne on billows as in an ocean. Some saw Christ, some saw the Virgin Mary, some saw Goddess Kali, and some the Prophet Mahammed. But through all these divergent experiences had come to them the joy and the serenity of communion with the Spirit of the universe. Some of them had undergone deliberate training on mystic lines ; to others experiences came without any such training. In their methods of communication too they differed. Keshab Sen went on a propaganda tour all over the world ; Ramakrishna prepared one individual to receive his power ; the Bab selected eighteen to proclaim his message ; and St. Therese remained secluded in a convent depending solely on the power of prayer. In their ideas of celibacy also they differed. Some thought it absolutely necessary, and even others like Evan Roberts who did not take the vow remained unmarried. On the other hand persons like Keshab Sen and the Bab were married and had children. The authoress of the *Golden Fountain* was not only married but stated explicitly that there was nothing in the married state or any of its functions to harm the highest life.

It must be noted here that in spite of the minor differences in disciplines and modes of thought, the validity of mysticism is established when it is seen that the lives of all mystics prove the possibility of experiencing the Divine and the beneficent effect of such experience on life in the form of certitude, peace, joy and universal love. To those who criticise the mystic state as a degeneration akin to drunkenness and hallucination, the lesson that Sir Francis draws from the study of these mystics is quite a fitting reply: "A drunkard certainly delights while he is drunk, but the next morning is the worse, not the better for it. So also is a person with a hallucination. The mystic on the other hand finds his whole being saturated with the joy he has felt. It has become a lasting possession to him. And it alters his whole attitude to life." The other important point raised by the author is the place of celibacy in the culture of the mystic faculty. We shall consider it in another part of this essay.

The Philosophic Basis of Mystic Experience

If the experience of the mystic is not akin to drunkenness and hallucination on account of its beneficial effects on life, what rational explanation can we give of its reality and how can we fit it in with the rest of our knowledge? To these questions Sir Francis has got interesting replies. All experiences of life are, according to him, a mixture of the subjective and the

objective factors, and mystical experience is no exception to this rule. Nothing in this universe, including even a particle of dust, is isolated or forms an independent entity by itself. All are bound up as the integral parts of a whole, and all are therefore affected by that whole. That whole consists not of this earth or even of the solar system alone, but of the entire universe. The mystic, like any other being, is therefore influenced by the whole, and the state peculiar to him must also be the result, not merely of the internal workings of the mind, but also of the impact of influences from outside. To characterise his experience as purely subjective is therefore incorrect.

Now this inter-connectedness and inter-dependence of all things in one coherent whole is the common conclusion of science and philosophy. The common man at the sensuous or the intellectual level does not feel this unity of things, or recognise that he is a part of a coherent system. The mystic however comes to feel this unity intensely. "In this view," says Sir Francis, "we might interpret the mystical experience as a vivid impression of the universe as a whole. In his experience the mystic has become aware of the underlying unity of the Spirit which binds together and animates the universe. The part has become aware of the whole—of the inward essence of the whole." Coherence with the rest of knowledge is one of the tests applied for measuring the validity

of an experience. The mystic's realisation of all existence as a coherent spiritual unity is in wonderful agreement with the quest of science and philosophy, and Sir Francis finds in this a conclusive test of the validity of mystic experience.

At this point Sir Francis raises a question : If the part is always influenced by the whole, and if the recognition of this inter-relatedness of the whole is the essence of mystic experience, why is it that it does not come to all ? It comes, he says, only to those who have most earnestly striven after the ideal, and not even in the case of all such. There is an element of grace in it. Just as in the human personality, the spirit or the vital energy works now more through the legs, next more through the arms, at another time more through the brain and so on, so also the Supreme Spirit does not work always with uniform pressure and intensity through all its parts. The condition which determines which part should be the channel for the special manifestation of the Supreme Spirit seems to be the intensity of striving in the part for understanding the whole. Supposing an aspiring cell in the brain of a person is struggling to understand him. On a rare occasion when the cell is striving hardest to know him, he happens to express himself through that cell in an effort to write down some of his ideas. Just then the effort of the cell or the part, and the effort of the person or the whole will coin-

cide, and there will be a tremendous rush of the spirit of the living personality on the cell. The mystic experience corresponds to this coincidence of the efforts of the part and of the whole, and the consequent comprehension of the whole by the part.

This is also the reason, Sir Francis contends, why the great mystic should be regarded as the highest type of man. "He has developed something more than the ordinary consciousness. He has become most vividly aware of, and most intimately in touch with, the Central Spirit of the universe—aligned himself with the Central Time—and been lifted to a higher plane of being. Moreover, while science and philosophy coldly assure us of the coherence and inter-dependence and inter-connectedness of things in one whole, the mystic actually feels that underlying unity and feels it to an intense degree. No one like he has such a deep sense of fellowship with the whole universe, with every living thing, with every human being." Again he says, "The mystic has had experience—direct and immediate experience—of the inmost working of the universe. His soul has been in actual correspondence with the soul of the universe. Having entered deeply into the Spirit of the universe and having been even more deeply penetrated by it, he has known something of what the essential nature of the universe really is."

The above is a brief summary of the theory of mystical experience

propounded by Sir Francis in his book. Its special merit consists in the elimination of antiquated and sectarian conceptions and the substitution of universal and scientific terminology in expounding the significance of intuitive faculty which is the gateway of spiritual experience. It is no doubt highly speculative from the point of a critical scientist, and it is very doubtful whether any psychologist of religion will agree to it. But it has to be remembered that the day is past when any scientist can contend that the intellectual and the sensuous approaches are the only ways of comprehending objective facts. In the light of many experiments performed in telepathy, clairvoyance, telekinesis, thought-reading, etc., under strict laboratory conditions, super-normal ways of knowing can not but be admitted even from the scientific point of view. Under such circumstances a hypothesis of this kind that Sir Francis puts forward as a result of a comparative and critical study of the highest form of experience has its own scientific value too. For the lay man interested in mysticism, this restatement in modern terminology of what is meant by spiritual intuition will be highly illuminating.

The Cosmic Significance of the Mystical Type

Among the other interesting points dealt with in the book is the cosmic significance that the writer finds in the appearance of mystics in this world. The mystics are, according to him, the feelers or

tentacles sent out by the human species towards the higher plane of life. "They reveal to us the conditions of that mode of life into which the human race is evolving. Their experience is the peak experience of the race and a pointer of the direction in which it is developing." In the well-known scientific notion that life came out of water on to the land and that by being subjected to various new influences thence it entered into a wider, fuller and intenser state of being, Sir Francis finds a scientific analogy for his contention that the few examples of mystics we came across in the world mark the new state into which humanity is to develop in the future. We have our own doubts regarding the validity of applying this analogy drawn from physical evolution to the higher development of personality. It is doubtful whether mankind as a whole is ever going to become a race of mystics. The history of man, so far as we know it, gives very little evidence in support of this. On the other hand as the struggle of life becomes keener and man's attention becomes increasingly focussed on the details of material existence he seems to be losing that peculiar outlook on life and that delicate sensitivity of being which the development of the mystical faculty pre-supposes. This is the cause of what is so often described as the materialism of to-day, and unless it is remedied there is very little chance of increasing the output of true mystics in human society.

The Cultivation of the Mystical Attitude

Sir Francis has some constructive suggestions in regard to the cultivation of the attitude favourable for the development of the mystical faculty. If mysticism is so valuable to life, the universities should try to train men in mystical life, as they are training them in sciences, literature, technology, etc. He points out that the modern methods of communication like the steamship, the rail roads and the radio may be used by men to gain the advantage of the best company, that is, of those joyous children of the Spirit whose company gladdens all who are privileged to share it. More than that he believes that the time has come when a psychologist who can bring his mind without prejudices to this crucially important subject is distressingly needed to steer the groping humanity through the unchartered realm of the Spirit. We for our part doubt very much whether a psychologist can ever fulfil this function that saints have hitherto fulfilled, unless of course the psychologist of to-morrow changes into something quite different from what he is to-day and tries to approximate himself to the ideal of saintliness.

The Mystic of the Future

The conception of Sir Francis as to what the mystic of the future will be is as interesting as the rest of his reflections on mysticism. The mystic of the future will not only cultivate the sense of community with the whole by introspective

methods but will also enrich his experiences by an appreciation of the world now revealed by science—of the astronomical immensities of the world, of marvellous variety of life and of the worlds within worlds in which his own life is cast. Realising the deep significance of the everyday things of life, he will take common objects as the subjects of his meditation—the grandeur of the thunderstorm, the magnificence of monsoon clouds, the beauty in form and colour of some tree or flower, the sweetness of a robin's song, the dignity of a stag, the keenness of a hawk, the intuition and spontaneity of a child, the light in a lover's eyes, the art of Shakespeare, the greatness of Napoleon, the compassion of Catherine Booth, the gay saintliness of St. Francis or any of the high qualities typified in living examples of the day. He will not seclude himself from life but live in its very midst. Not in jungles and monasteries but in the very midst of society he will live, recognising the Divinity in men and women and being stimulated by that Divinity to higher spiritual achievements. Though in earlier years his attention will be concentrated more on perfecting himself, in more mature years he will set more on helping his fellows, his country and mankind. He will combine reason with feeling, and will therefore take a different view of passions from the mystics of the past. "They (the passions) need not degrade: purified and refined they will only elevate."

So not suppression but control of the passions will be his aim. Not mortification but sublimation, not celibacy but marriage—marriage with one who is capable of eliciting from him the divinest potentialities in his passions and of making them heroic."

Mysticism and Sex Life

Here we must pause to consider an important issue raised in the last sentence. Much of this characterisation of the future mystics may be true, although we, for our part, believe that mystics at all times will tend more to adopt Krishna, Buddha, Christ and Ramakrishna—the highest manifestations of the Divinity on earth—as their objects of meditation than lesser manifestations of nature's glories like the thunderstorm, the spring, the dignified stag or the keen hawk. But whether celibacy is essential for the highest mystical development or not is a more important question and we must bestow some thought on it here. According to Sir Francis "married love is the most natural way, and may prove the best way of reaching perfection. By the long-continued loving of one another in the spirit of the universe, the man may evoke from the woman, and the woman from the man, the highest capacities of each." He further agrees with Douglas White in maintaining that "the corporeal intimacy should be the sensible manifestation of the spiritual relation, body, mind and spirit fitting into each other with a glow of satisfaction," and that "the

spiritual irradiates the physiological function, and that the physiological intensifies the spiritual." In support of his contention he quotes the examples of several saints treated by him in the book, who were married men and women.

We differ from this position entirely. Not that we look upon married love or sex life as something evil, but we maintain that the highest reaches of mystical life can be attained only through perfect continence. Sex energy, as modern psycho-analysis has shown, is the basic energy of life and it is only by the perfect refinement and diversion of it into the higher centres of our being that we can develop the highest powers of personality. Besides, just as married love fails to reach its highest possibilities if its direction is diverted from a single object to others beside it, so also the love of the Supreme if it should reach its highest perfection, must culminate in an entire resignation of the body, mind and soul unto Him, without the reservation of any part of it by way of allegiance and loyalty to a second love beside Him. In the case of the perfected mystic it is no doubt possible to recognise the love of the Divine even in the smaller loves of the world, but until the highest state is reached, the aspirant will only delude himself if he experiments at a higher law for which he is not competent. We do not therefore deny the existence of the mystics of the highest order even outside the ranks of lifelong celibates, but

what we do say is that they are exceptions to the general rule. We for our part are disposed to classify the generality of mystics leading the ordinary sex life as mystics of a lower order for the reasons we have given above. The classification of mystics into higher and lower orders is sanctioned by Sir Francis himself when he says in another context: "And the Creative Spirit is evidently manifested in a higher degree in some of its creatures than in others—in men than in snails, in the mystic than in the murderer, in some mystics more than in others, and in the highest mystic more at some times than at others."

Monasticism is a frank recognition of this fundamental law of spiritual life that the highest perfection demands a whole-hearted

and entire self-surrender. In all its genuine manifestations, it is far from being a condemnation of married love; for true monasticism flourishes only in a social soil that has the highest ideal of married love. We do not therefore see any antagonism between these two ideals, as some are disposed to see. The monastic ideal only stands for the accommodation of those daring individuals who do not want that any other form of love should interfere with the love of the Highest. Hence we feel that as long as the spiritual ideal burns bright in the heart of humanity, monasticism will be a living institution in this world in spite of all its pitfalls, and in the rank of its votaries—the monks—will be found the most spiritually ambitious even among the mystics of the future.

IN THE COMPANY OF A MAHATMA

As in the previous instalments of this series of the reminiscences, the reader will find herein also many useful instructions and inspiring exhortations.

TURIYANANDAJI'S way of encouraging the enquirer was often different from that of others. He told some one thus: "By remaining a bachelor you are really very fortunate. You are, as it were, sitting on an elevated height and stretching your hands high up into the sky." Another was hesitating whether he should marry or not. The Swami told him, "To whom are you going to sell and enslave yourself? Why should you become a slave or servant of anybody else save and except God?"

Swami Turiyanandaji enjoyed sound health in boyhood and youth.

One could infer and understand it by seeing him even in old age. But he felt quite unwell in the last part of his life. On being asked why it happened so, he said firmly erecting the forefinger of his right hand: "During my stay in America I had to live like this—very austere. So the body broke down."

Once at Benares he was requested to say something about Sri Ramakrishna on the occasion of the Master's anniversary in 1920. Swami Turiyananda thereupon said: "I also asked Swamiji once to do so. He said 'What shall I tell of Him. He was

'Love personified.' Sri Ramakrishna used to speak of himself jokingly that he was the destroyer of Karmas and that he was like a French possession. By that He meant that by eliminating the evil impressions of the aspirants and at the same time awakening the good ones that were dormant, he could put them on the way to liberation. If a British subject after commission of any crime takes refuge in a French possession, the British Police cannot arrest him. He is safe and secure there. So the sins and sorrows of those who surrender themselves at the feet of Sri Ramakrishna will be soon removed and redressed."

Speaking about how an unmarried man can lead the life of a good house-holder, he said — "See, — Babu is leading a very good life even though he is not married. With a number of students he has started a family, and sharing their joys and sorrows he is spending his life happily."

Ill-health almost upsets a spiritual aspirant. About this point his advice deserves special attention. He wrote to different persons as follows :

(1) Unwelcome news of your indifferent health pains me very much. Go on with your meditation with assiduity. Through the grace of the Divine Mother all impediments may be got over. But you must stick to your meditations unremittingly. Whether body is ill or well, never postpone your spiritual practices. After some time you will find to your surprise that even all insurmountable obstacles have disappeared. Do meditation for a certain period tenaciously—then both body and mind will be all right. When the mind is purified, body also becomes immune from diseases. It is meditation alone that can purge the

mind as well as the body of all impurities. Devotion devoid of desires is the best form of worship; you will have to pour your heart's love, affection and devotion on Him; then alone mind can be withdrawn from all outer things. In that state of mind thoughts of body will not be able to move you. Mind will be imbued with the thoughts of the Divine Mother. That is the real way to blessedness.

(2) He wrote to another : I had often heard Sri Ramakrishna saying this—'Let the body be occupied with its sufferings, but, O mind, you remain in bliss.' This dictum was literally illustrated in his life. Peace of mind should on no account be disturbed by bodily ailments. The body must pay the penalties of actions. The mind should be as calm and firm as an adamant so that it cannot be dragged down to lower level by the body. Let the body reap the fruits of its actions, for they cannot be escaped under any circumstances ; but the mind should not forget God in the midst of these troubles.

(3) My physician friends are advising me to eat opium by which I may be a bit benefited or relieved. But my whole soul revolts at the idea of being a slave to opium. The body will not last for ever—why should I then yield to a bad habit?

(4) Sound health is obtained by great virtue. This is what the scriptures say :

गृहोक्त्वितापद्मनदेशनि च ।

आत्मापापात्मालां कलानेतानि देहाणु ॥

'Illness, grief, lamentation, bondage and sorrows are the fruits of the tree of misdeeds committed by oneself.' But one may get rid of them to a great extent if one can neglect the cares of the body by surrendering whole-heartedly at the feet of the Lord and following the

maxim: 'Let the body take care of itself but the mind should be absorbed in Him.'

There is no gain in discontented grumblings and murmurings. By that none can evade the inevitable sufferings but on the other hand it does a lot of positive harm by way of making us oblivious of the ultimate ideal of our life. It is the existence of desire for sense gratifications that makes us unhappy during illness and ill-health. For spiritual practices, health of mind is more needed than that of the body, as it is the mind that works more in meditations than the body. Performance of holy actions keeps the mind well and active. We should therefore pay special attention to the fact that we do only those holy actions that may free us from the earth instead of fettering us to it. Slowly but surely the body is marching towards the grave. Nobody can stop it. But the mind exists for all time. That is, many bodies will come and go but our mind will continue for ever till full wisdom is attained. For, until perfection one must undergo repeated incarnations. So the most essential duty we have to attend to is purifying the mind.

Swami Turiyananda was one day explaining to us why the Rishis were called 'Tapodhana'. In this world some regard learning as wealth; some, prestige and pedigree; some, possessions; and some, beauty as the most important thing in life. So to a Sadhu, Tapasya or spiritual practices and penances constitute real wealth or 'Dhana'.

The menials ordinarily shirk or neglect their work. In this connection the Swami spoke of Balaram Bose, the devoted lay disciple of Sri Ramakrishna. He said, "Once we put up for many days in the house of this said devotee,

When I expressed to him my dissatisfaction with the conduct of his menials who were not at all attending to their duties but were stealing things from the house, Balaram Babu said—'Where shall I get saintly servants?'

Swami Turiyananda used to lay stress much on the word 'Dhira' mentioned frequently in the Upanishads. He used to say, "It is said by Narada in his aphorisms on devotion that wisdom is attained also by the grace of God or even by that of the liberated souls. The highest ideal of our civilisation and culture is the vision of the Eternal One in all." The Swami then quoted from the Gita the thirty-second Sloka of the sixth chapter :

आत्मैपर्येन सर्वतः म प्रविष्ट योगीन् ।
सुखं वा यदि वा दुःखं एवमि प्राप्ते मतः ॥

'He who judges of pleasure and pain everywhere, by the same standard as he applies to himself, that Yogi, Arjuna, is regarded as the highest.'

The Swami often used to narrate instructive stories. One of these runs thus : "One Sadhu was doing his evening meditation on the Ganges. He saw a scorpion being carried away by the current. The Sadhu saved its life by pulling it ashore, but the ungrateful creature stung him when it reached the shore. When the scorpion was again being carried away by the current, the Sadhu did as before but the scorpion stung him then also. The same occurrence happened a third time also. Calmly enduring the pain, the monk went on with his meditation. Witnessing all that, I asked him why he was saving the scorpion and thereby putting himself to suffering. In reply the monk said: 'It is doing its own Dharma (duty born of one's nature)

and I am doing mine. We are only following our respective natures that are irresistible. Its nature is to do injury even to benefactors but mine is to do good even to my enemies."

During his sojourn in Lucknow the Swami went out one early morning to answer the calls of nature. He said, "I sat on a piece of stone when all on a sudden I saw to my astonishment a big tiger sitting on a higher level and looking around. Its look and gestures were so heroic that it appeared as if it cared the least for the whole world." On being interrupted by the question of the hearer whether he was terrified or not the Swami added, "No, I was not afraid of it but was charmed by its majestic might and spirited posture. My attention was rivetted on these features. As soon as its eyes fell on mine, it left the place without delay."

Swami Turiyananda told us that he had met many Sadhus during his performance of spiritual austerities in the Himalayas. Out of them he

made special mention of only three. These were Ramasram, Kevalasram, and Vijnanananda. The last mentioned one was a master of the six systems of Hindu Philosophy and used to wander alone like a rhinoceros with a piece of loin-cloth as his only possession. He knew by heart Sankara's famous commentaries on the Gita, the Brahmasutras and the Upanishads. They were so fresh in his memory that he never consulted the scriptures for any reference. He could speak in Sanskrit very fluently hours together. During the travels itinerant monks used to assemble round him and discuss many metaphysical problems with him in right earnest. His answers would throw a flood of light on many a knotty question in philosophy. He was the preceptor of the Raja of Tehri but never started any Ashrama in spite of the persistent requests of his royal disciple. It is doubtful if any scholar like him lived then in India.

IS OUR LIFE A DREAM ?

By C. Mahadeviah

[Mr. C. Mahadeviah pursues in these paragraphs a line of enquiry which is peculiar to Vedanta. The world is a dream—is a statement that is often made by students of Vedanta, but it is seldom that people have any clear idea as to the exact significance of this statement. Mr. Mahadeviah's exposition will be much helpful in forming some clear ideas on this point.]

POETS and philosophers, mystics and metaphysicians have, with one voice, declared that this life is a mere dream; and people who pride themselves in their sound common-sense have always treated the statement with contemptuous indifference. Even some poets like Longfellow have said :

"Tell me not in mournful numbers
Life is but an empty dream."

So, it seems worthwhile to go a bit deeply into this question and find out exactly how much of truth it contains or whether it is at all true in any sense.

The first step is to note the similarities as well as the differences between waking and dream. It is not possible to say that there is absolutely no difference between the two, for, in that case, they would become identical and the two words 'waking' and 'dream' would become unnecessary to denote them. But the similarities between the two are so numerous that it is better to exhaust them before going into the difference between them. In dream we have a complete universe as we have in waking. We have our sun and moon, stars and planets, land and sea, mountains and rivers, forests and meadows, beasts and birds, towns and villages, trains and cars. We have human denizens inhabiting our world. We have our wives and children, our kith and kin, our friends and foes, our joys and sorrows. We weep and laugh. We sleep and dream, just as we do in waking. We have memory of a long past and expectation of a distant future. If it is said that some things in dream are incongruous like a man seeing his own buck and so forth, the reply is that they are not incongruities so far as the dream universe is concerned, that they appear to be so when contrasted with the standards of waking and that those of waking would appear as much incongruous when contrasted with the standards of dream.

Though there are so many similarities between waking and dream, the difference between them is not far to seek. Generally it is said that dream is stultified whereas waking is not. Though there is some truth in this statement, it is not correctly expressed. The first point to remember is that what we now call dream was as real as waking, was, in fact, waking while it lasted. Now that it is past and

has become stultified, we call it a dream. Even as the state before us is waking, dream was also waking while it was before us. Hence, it is more correct to define waking as a present state and dream as a past state. It may be said that yesterday's waking is a past state, but it is not a dream. But what is called yesterday's waking is no state at all but only a memory which persists in the present waking. It belongs to what is called to-day's waking as memory of past events. Moreover, I know that I am living in the same universe as I did yesterday whereas the dream universe is distinct from the waking universe, since it cannot be located anywhere in the latter. Besides, we have to remember that dream has also its yesterday and yesterday's waking state. So, instead of saying that we pass from dream to waking it would be more correct to say that we pass from one waking to another and declare the previous waking to be dream. Beyond this difference of present and past, waking and dream cannot be shown to differ on any point.

Now, it is clear that it is meaningless to say that waking is a state which is not stultified. Waking is always a present state and it is not possible for a state to be both present and be stultified at the same time. The moment it is stultified it is past and so long as it is present it cannot be stultified. So, the argument that the present state is waking because it is not stultified, cannot hold good. If it does, it applies with equal force to dream, for we could assert, while dream lasted, that it was waking because it was not stultified.

What is it that is meant when life is called a mere dream? Evidently, it is meant that our life is unreal like dream. Longfellow, quoted above, further says "Life is

real, life is earnest." Now why do we say that dream is unreal? It is because the world observed in a dream vanishes into nothing. It cannot be imagined to exist anywhere. It cannot be located anywhere in the waking world. It has simply dwindled into nothing. In other words, we call dream unreal because it is stultified. If so, then it is clear that waking cannot be unreal in the same sense. For we have already shown that waking being always a present state, it is not possible to speak of its stultification.

Let us go a little deeper into the question. Sleep overcomes us. Soon we feel we are awake. We have a world before us. We are subjected to great suffering. Perhaps, we lose our dear ones. We weep bitterly. We beat our breast. We tear our hair. But soon we awake. We come to know it was all a dream. Then our tears give place to irrepressible laughter. We laugh at the whole show, in fact, we enjoy it. We relate it to our friends and enjoy it still more. Now, who is it that wept in dream and laughs when awake? The two cannot be identical, for if I wept because I lost, then I must laugh because I gain. But here I have not gained anything. I have simply come to know that it was all a dream and I laugh; what is more, I enjoy my previous weeping. Surely the one that laughs now cannot be the same that wept a moment ago. But can I say that it was not I who dreamt but someone else? Certainly not. How then is this dilemma to be solved?

Let us think of an actor on the stage. Suppose he is acting the part of a king. In the story he loses his wife and he weeps bitterly. Suppose at the moment he forgets that he is so-and-so and imagines that he is that king in the story.

Then he really weeps and is unhappy. But the moment he goes to the green-room he remembers who he really is and begins to enjoy his weeping on the stage. He feels elated that he acted so well. Our waking from a dream is like going to the green-room from the stage. We remember that our real nature is that of the witness of the dream state. For though the dream has vanished along with the ego who suffered and wept, we survive. We now realise that we, the witness, forgot our real nature while we dreamt and wrongly identified ourselves with the dream ego. Hence our enjoyment of the whole show.

Now think of an actor who, even while on the stage, does not forget that he is really so-and-so, and that he is only acting the part of a king. He still weeps—as he has to do it—but he enjoys it even while he weeps. It is not necessary for him that the scene should end if he has to enjoy his acting. Even so the wise man does not forget his real nature as witness even while he is awake, that is when the state is present; whereas the ordinary man, like the other actor, is ignorant of his real nature as witness while the state is present but comes to know of it only when the state is past. But the wise man knows that even while he is awake, he is really witnessing the ego which suffers and enjoys, weeps and laughs, as he did when he was awake in dream.*

Now, let us place ourselves in the position of the witness which we really are, and view the dream and waking states. The dream state has vanished into nothing. But the witness is still there. It is now wit-

* स्वप्नानि आपत्तिगतांशोनि येनानुपूर्वनि ।
महान् चिमुकात्मने मत्ताधीरो न लोकते ॥
कठ० २, १, ४.

nessing the waking state even as it was witnessing the dream state while the dream lasted. If we consider the matter well, we shall find that it is not possible to say that the witness did not exist at any time, for to note its non-existence at the time another witness would be required and so on *ad-infinitum*. If we call that real whose non-existence cannot even be imagined, then the witness is supremely real. And compared with the witness the dream state as well as the waking state cannot be real. For we know that the dream world cannot be located

anywhere in the waking world and even so the waking world cannot be located anywhere in the dream world. They are mutually exclusive. One does not and cannot exist while the other is present. So we can speak, nay, we know, of a time when either of them did not exist. So they cannot be so real as the witness whose non-existence cannot even be imagined. Anything less than real must be unreal. We cannot speak of a thing as half real or three-fourths real. In this sense, compared with the witness, waking is as unreal as dream.

THE HIMALAYAS AND THE HINDU CULTURE

By Swami Jagadiswarananda

[The Ganges and the Himalayas have, of all the physical features of India, gone deepest into the cultural and spiritual consciousness of the Indian nation. Swami Jagadiswarananda's article gives us a very valuable review of the extent and value of the influence of the latter in various fields of life—in poetry, architecture and religion.]

THE mystery and majesty of the Himalayas have made the deepest impression upon the Hindu mind. The Hindus even in the farthest south of India regard the Himalayas with veneration as the Mohammedan thinks of Mecca and the Christian of Jerusalem. A cursory survey of Indian literature will make it clear that Hindu poetry and mythology point to the Himalayas as the centre of the world and as the throne of the Great God. The following paragraphs attempt to show how the Himalayas have influenced and inspired Hindu art, architecture, religion and sculpture, that is, Hindu culture as a whole.

The Vedas, the sacred Scriptures of the Hindus, have been rightly called by Prof. D. S. Sharma as the Himalayan treatises, for the Himalayas are the

birth-place of these most ancient literature of the human race. Swami Vivekananda was of opinion that Uttarakhanda is the place where the Vedic Rishis and Upanishadic seers lived and moved. Once the Swami was asked in the West how the Hindus made such abstruse metaphysical speculations in the tropical climate of India. The Swami promptly replied that they were produced on the Himalayan heights of about 15,000 feet above sea level. Havel observes that the early Aryans—the authors and compilers of Vedic hymns, had their home in the Himalayan regions and that looking at the heavenly scenery around their Himalayan home, they, with their ideals of simple living and high thinking, had no special need of temples and images other than those which the

Divine Craftsman, Visvakarman, who built earth and heaven, had placed before their eyes.

When the ancient Hindus spread further and further away from the Himalayas, they always carried with them the deep impression which their early environment had made upon their minds and perpetuated them in their literature as well as in the images and symbols used in their religious rituals and art. It is the life's dream of the virtuous Hindu to go on a pilgrimage to the Himalayas, wending his way from shrine to shrine amidst the perpetual snow ranges. The ultimate goal of Hindu monks is not only to climb the perilous steeps and the rugged precipices to Kedarnath and Badrinath, Gangotri and Yamunotri, Amarnath and Pashupatinath, Kailas and Mansasarovar, but also to lay down their lives in penances in one of these sanctuaries in the heart of the Himalayas.

The closing scene of the Mahabharata gives the earliest literary record of the great Himalayan pilgrimage. The epic tells how the Pandava brothers, tired of life's struggles, retired from the world and set out to climb to the divine city of the immortal gods. The virtue of that holy mountain, Kailas, declares the Epic "was said to be so great that Ravana, the demon king of Lanka, flew in his magic car to Kailas and began to burrow a hole beneath the rock in order that he might transport it bodily to his strong-hold and use the divine power against his adversary. Parvati felt the mountain quake and clutched Siva's arm to rouse him from meditation. But the Great God who was not to be coerced by the magic of the ten-armed demon pressed down his foot and imprisoned Ravana in his self-made dungeon where

he remained a thousand years until by penance he gained release."

The wonderful Mansasarovar, Lake of Mind, lies at the altitude of about 16,000 feet near the centre of the Himalayan Heaven. Its deep blue waters, they say, mirror the Creator's mind. It is, also, according to Indian ideas, the fountain-head of the whole river-system of Aryavarta, for the Indus, the Brahmaputra and the Ganges have their sources not far from its shores. This fact sufficiently accounts in a sense for the veneration with which it is regarded by the Hindus. The Vishnu Purana says that the creator Brahma has his throne like the "seed vessel of a lotus" near Mount Kailas. The Vayu Purana uses in describing the Himalayas the floral symbol of the long white trumpet-shaped Datura alba sacred to Shiva. The Hindu traditions run that this pyramidal snow peak is the sanctum sanctorum of the Divine Yogi, Siva, and his consort Parvati, Himalaya's fair daughter. Even the atheistic minds, not to speak of the idealistic ones, are impressed with the idea of a spiritual presence in the solitude of the eternal snows. When the snow-clad peaks are flooded with the rays of the rising or setting sun, they bring home to mind the feelings that they are none but Mahadeva wrapt in eternal meditation. When the moonlight floods the icy peaks at night they look like silver hills. The same idea is expressed in the Dhyana of Siva thus : अस्तित्वं मृत्युं
रजस्तित्विनिम चारनद्वायगं गताकृत्वोऽपलभ्यते । etc. Immensity and vastness, grandeur and wonder, of the titanic Himalayan masses inspire awe and eliminates egoism at least for a time being. Nature has built there a heavenly cathedral in which are enshrined the Devas' thrones, hence man cannot but be reminded at

the sight of the Himalayas of the Reality behind this beautiful phenomena with which he is ever occupied and engrossed. About their scenic beauty Kalidasa declares in the Megha-duta that the lofty peaks of Kailas "fill the sky like lotuses". The great poet in his Kumara-sambhava addresses King Himavan as "earth's stately pillar, girt above the cloud". Ekai Kuwaguchi recording his impressions of the Himalayas writes in his "Three Years in Tibet" thus : "Mount Kailas itself towers so majestically above the peaks around that I fancied I saw in it the image of our mighty Lord Buddha calmly addressing his 6000 disciples". Hindu mythology idealises Himalayan snow-goddess Parvati as Siva's wife, Sati, the apotheosis of purity and devotion. Hindu idea of spiritual purity also is most intimately associated with the Himalayas. The Ganges according to a Puranic myth is said to fall down from Brahma's heaven upon Siva's head at Kailas in seven streams to wash away the sins of the sons of Sagara. The myth of Ganga's celestial birth, according to Havel, is undoubtedly inspired by the sight of the seven great waterfalls of Mount Kailas. Kalidasa thus sings in his Kumarasambhava :

" Bright Ganga falling with her
heavenly waves
Himalaya's head with sacred laves,
Bearing the flowers the seven Great
Sages fling,
To crown the forehead of the Moun-
tain King."

Hinduism has also deified this longest and loftiest mountain of the world. In Indian mythology and poetry the Himalayas are alternately the sacred shrines of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. They are also personifications of the Hindu Trinity. The Saivites think of these mountains as Siva himself and to

the Vaishnavites it is none other than Vishnu. The Himalayan shrine is built by nature as the cathedral church for all Hindu India. The Hindu craftsmen built temples in imitation of this mystic mountain. The Saiva temples represent a particular peak called Kailas. The Vishnu temple is a symbol of the mythical mountain, Meru which may be considered as a synthetic expression for the whole mass of the Himalayas, regarded as a mystic mountain connecting earth and heaven. The Vishnu image like the Siva image represents a personification of the mountain. Sometimes the summit of the Mount Meru is also regarded as the crown on Vishnu's head in the same way as the snow cap of Kailas is regarded as Siva's crown. Siva's form is considered white because the mountain is a snow mountain. He is blue-necked because a snow peak, seen from a distance, often appears with a band of violet blue haze just below the snow line.

Kalidasa in his Kumarasambhava puts these ideas in the mouth of one of the seven Rishis who comes to Himavan for his consent for the marriage of his daughter Uma with the Divine Hermit of Kailas :—

" Thy mind is as lofty as thy summits
are,
Sages say truly, Vishnu is Thy name,
His Spirit breathed in thy mountain
frame.
Within the caverns of thy boundless
breast,
All things that move, and all that
move not, rest."

The poet voices the same Hindu sentiment in another description, occurring in the same book, as to how the sacred mountain evokes in the Hindu heart the image of the Divine Yogi lost in mystic contemplation.

He is seated on a firm seat in his Himalayan hermitage thus :
 "Calm as a full cloud resting on a hill,
 A waveless lake when every breeze is
 still,
 Like a torch burning on sheltered spot,
 So still was he, unmoving, breathing
 not."

Let us now see how the Himalayan symbol has influenced Hindu religious ritual and art. In the Hindu world, it should be remembered, aesthetics is never divorced from religion. The mission of Indian art at its best, remarks Havel, an accepted authority on the subject, is the spiritualisation of daily life and work of the individual as well as the nation. With Emerson the true Hindu holds that when beauty is sought for its own sake and not for religion, it degrades and demoralises the seekers. Art to the Hindu is a religious exercise and a process of spiritual unfoldment. The Hindu philosopher like the Platonic thinker uses the beauties of earth as a stepping stone by which he soars upwards in the higher realms of thought. Hence the ideal of Indian art is deeply rooted in religion. That is why we find frequent application of the Himalayan symbol in Indian art and religion. The Puranic idea is that the continent of Asia is to be conceived as a four petalled lotus flower, the seed vessel of which is Brahma's holy city or cell in the region of Mount Kailas, the centre of the world lotus. In ancient art of Egypt also a Lotus-flower was used as a symbol for the remote mountains of Upper Egypt in which the sources of the Nile lay hidden. The Himalayan snows were thought of as the glittering upturned petals of the flower. The plains with sub-Himalayan slopes formed its four great petals turned down upon the stalk which

sprang from the navel of Narayana, the Eternal Spirit reposing on the bed of the cosmic ocean.

Mahanirvana Tantra gives the mystic and metaphysical meaning of this lotus symbolism. The root, it says, is Brahman, the unknown and the unknowable from which all creation and manifestation spring. The stalk is Maya, the genesis of the world phenomena. The flower is the world itself. The fruit is Moksha or liberation. Havel says that the lotus symbol like all other Indian symbols has both subjective and objective significance. It is rooted deep in the mud of a lake or a river and pushes its way gradually upwards to the water until its fair flower blossoms, in the light of Heaven. The lotus or water lily is Nature's own symbol for the spiritual process of the human mind when it wins freedom in super-consciousness. Micro-cosmic and macro-cosmic evolution and involution being similar, the Yogi works describe the various plexuses of the spinal column as Padmas or luminous lotuses.

Indian craftsmen and sculptors have frequently repeated and reproduced the traditional philosophical pattern of the world lotus in all master-pieces of Indian artistic achievements. This lotus is most magnificently carved upon the pillars of Sanchi, Barhut, Besnagar, Ajanta, Karli and Elephanta. The glittering temple cut out of the cliff at Ellora has been named after the sacred mountain Kailas. The temple is so made that it resembles Kailas and transports the worshipper to the Great God's Himalayan shrines. The great waterfall at Ellora suggests itself to the Indian mystic as a fragment of the holy mountain at Kailas. The Sarvath column represents the world lotus in a modified form, and its symbolic connection with the lake Manasarovara

is also undeniable. The motif of this floral symbol is reflected in the lofty temple spires known as Sikhara which suggests the massive and majestic peaks of the Himalayas. One western authority on Indian art observes that the famous relic casket of Kanishka, the Buddhist Emperor, is associated with this lotus symbolism. The same idea is embodied in Nepalese, Tibetan and other schools of Buddhist art. Universal pillars represented by the colossal statues of Buddha, Vishnu, Siva and Brahma also express the same symbolism. According to Havel the dancing images of Nataraja, Krishna and Kali convey to some extent at least the impression of Siva's mystic Himalayan shrine. The Ganges is so sacred to the Hindus because it has flown from the Kailas. That is why the devout Hindus not only in South India but also in distant Ceylon, Burma and other Hindu colonies have named the holy rivers of their respective provinces

after the Ganges, perhaps to be often reminded of the Himalayan peak where the Great God dwells. The holy places in the countries mentioned above bear appellations of the Himalayan Thirthas for the same purpose.

Thus we see the Himalayas have been the primal source of life and inspiration to all the higher aspects of Hindu culture such as art and literature, religion and philosophy. And it is for this reason that Indians, particularly Hindus and Buddhists, from a remote antiquity down to the present day, have held the Himalayas in high esteem. The magnetic Himalayan influence has indelibly stamped itself on every branch of Hindu culture. So it is neither exaggeration to say nor superstition to believe that Vedic thought was born and brought up in the lap of the Himalayas. Those who have seen with their own eyes the perpetual snow ranges will readily realise the truth of these statements.

SONGS FROM RAIDASA

(Translated from Original Hindi)

By R. C. Tandan, M.A., LL.B.

[Raidasa was a man of humble birth. He belonged to the so-called untouchable caste, but his wisdom and devotion enabled him to overcome the obstacles of a hostile social environment. These songs of his amply testify to his greatness.]

I

Tremulous is my understanding, O Narahari: how shall I offer devotion to Thee?

Mutual love is possible, when Thou seest me and I see Thee. Thou seest me, yet I see Thee not: this way I lose all perception.

Thou dwellest in all hearts eternally: I have not learnt to see Thee. Thine is all virtue, all vice mine: I have not owned the favours bestowed upon me.

I and Thou, Thine and mine—these result from want of understanding: how shall I find redemption?

Raidasa says : O compassionate Lord, hail to Thee, O Supporter of the world ?

II

Such is Devotion, listen, O brother. When Devotion is attained, one is purged of all pride.

What avails the dancing and the singing ? What avails the performance of penances ?

What avails the washing of the feet—if the Essence is not recognised ?

What avails the shaving of the head, what the performance of pilgrimage and fasting ?

Master and slave, devotee and servant—these relationships avail not, if the Great Essence is not recognised.

Says Raidasa : Devotion to Thee is a distant object—he who finds it is greatly fortunate.

Abandon thy pride, and efface the self, for thou art like an ant, and eateth the pickings.

THE FIVE BHUTAS—WHAT ARE THEY ?

By Kshiti C. Chaudhuri, M. A., F. C. S.

[The first part of Mr. Chaudhuri's article was published in the August issue of the *Vedanta Kesari*. The article is a translation of a writing of Acharya Ramendra Sundar Trivedi, a talented Bengali writer and scientist. The conclusion arrived at in the article is that the notion of Bhutas entertained by ancient Hindu philosophers is the result of a qualitative analysis and is therefore to be taken as a purely conceptional and ideal creation. The elements of the scientist are actual objects known through perception. The elements of the scientists and Bhutas of Hindu philosophers cannot be mutually identified because they have no points of similarity and are the results of different methods of enquiry.]

Now let us turn to the real topic, namely—the five 'Bhutas.' I shall take the Samkhya philosophy first. In the language of Samkhya the Bhutas (or Mahabhutas according to some) are five,—namely, Kshiti, Jala, Tejas, Vayu and Akasha. Now, what is 'Akasha' ? It is certainly not the 'ether' of physical science; because modern science does not recognise any correlation between ether and sound. Some console themselves with the thought that even though the scientists may not recognise the correlation to-day, still there will come a time

when they must do so,—and then the scientists will perceive the truth of the utterances made by the Rishis. I cannot console myself that way. I say that the Rishis are right, but that Akasha does not mean 'ether.' 'Akasha' is that of which the 'Tanmatra' (तन्मात्र) of 'sound' is the characteristic. If we must hypothesise a physical object, let us conceive of one which merely produces sound but which has no form, taste, smell or touch. Let us call it 'Akasha.' It is doubtful whether such a material object exists or will ever be discovered. But whatever that may

be, according to Samkhya the definition of Akasha is this: "That which possesses the characteristic of sound but possesses no other qualities is Akasha." It is merely a technical term—a concept born of the perception of sound.

Next, let us take 'Marut' or 'Vayu.' According to Samkhya, Vayu is that imaginary substance which has the qualities of sound and touch but no other quality. According to science Vayu or air is something else. It is the atmosphere which envelopes the earth, and wherein we breathe. It has the power of transmitting sound, it is perceptible to touch but it has also smell. This last attribute precludes it from being regarded as the 'Vayu' of Samkhya. If you say that the smell in air is not its own, but is borrowed from other objects, the scientist will at once retort by saying that on analysis air is found to contain not only oxygen, nitrogen, etc., whose smell is not so perceptible but also a slight trace of ammonia with very strong smell. Smell is thus inherent in air which cannot consequently be identified with the 'Vayu' of Samkhya. The confusion becomes worse if 'Vayu' be taken to denote any gaseous substance. I say that the Vayu of Samkhya is a mere 'concept'—it is that imaginary substance which has the power of transmitting sound and of producing the sensation of touch. The philosopher has absolute freedom to form his concepts and to coin his own words to express them.

Now we come to the third Mahabhuta 'Tejas.' According to Samkhya it has three qualities, namely, sound, touch and form. 'Tejas' is simply the combination of these three qualities. It is neither fire, nor any other heat-radiating substance;—it is neither electron, nor electricity, nor magnetism. It is

a mere concept, an imaginary substance.

Similarly, the fourth Mahabhuta according to Samkhya is that imaginary substance which has the attributes of sound, touch, form, and taste. The technical name for the combination of these four Tanmatras is Ap or Jala, which is neither our drinking water nor every kind of liquid.

The fifth Mahabhuta Kshiti is the combination of all the five Tanmatras. It is neither earth nor every kind of solid.

Now we have seen that the five Bhutas are not material objects. They are mere concepts not percepts. They are the products of the imagination, and have no objective reality. Both the scientists and the philosophers have to deal with such concepts; because without their help it is possible neither to describe nor to explain the material world. One may think that the Physicist, who studies only the objective world, has nothing to do with these mental concepts. But it is not so, he cannot move a step without those 'concepts.' He is always talking of the 'perfect solid,' 'perfect fluid,' 'frictionless surface,' 'perfectly rigid,' 'inextensible string,' etc.,—i.e., of things which are conspicuous by their absence in the material world. Engineering is based on the Science of Statics,—and there is no more practical subject than Engineering. A slight mistake in planning a railway bridge will lead the train into the river with the passengers. One may, therefore, be led to believe that the engineer must deal only with facts and with no concepts or hypotheses. But all the terms I have quoted just now are taken from Statics. In a text-book on Statics I saw an example like this: "Suppose that a weightless elephant is sliding down a perfectly

smooth hill surface, etc.' The 'weightless elephant', and 'perfectly smooth hill surface' are not to be seen in God's creation;—they exist only in the mental creation of a Viswamitra of a scientist.

Similarly, the five Bhutas of Samkhya philosophy are not to be found in God's creation—they first came into being in the mental world of Kapila or some other sage. The sage said, 'Let there be —', and they at once came into being. The sage looked at them, and found them good. They were 'good', because he succeeded in constructing the objective world with their aid. The material world is simply the combination of form, taste, smell, touch, and sound. There is nothing else in it than these five Tanmatras. Even if there be something else, that 'something' cannot be the object of our knowledge. What cannot be the object of knowledge is as good as non-existent. The imaginary substances called Bhutas are simply the combinations of the Tanmatras, in different numbers. Thus we can construct all material objects with the help of the five Bhutas in different numbers and proportions. There can be no dispute about it.

Take for instance earth, on which grass grows. It has form, taste, smell, touch, and sound;—it certainly contains Kshiti as well as the other Bhutas. Take another example—say, a piece of diamond or ruby. It has got a bright appearance (form), and it is hard to touch; but one cannot find any taste or smell in it. Therefore, according to Samkhya it may be said to be made mainly of 'Tejas.' If you discover any taste or smell in it, you can assume that Kshiti is also one of its constituents. Take yet another example, say, chlorine gas. It certainly contains Vayu, but from its strong smell and yellowish

colour we must admit that it contains 'Kshiti' and 'Tejas' as well;—we must, of course, remember that 'Kshiti' here does not mean earth or any other solid substance, and 'Tejas' does not mean fire.

Now it must be sufficiently clear how one can take all the objects of the physical world to be made of the five 'Bhutas.' This view is the outcome of philosophical analysis, not of scientific. The defect of this analysis is that it is merely qualitative and not at all quantitative. * * *

In Vedanta, 'Bhuta' has a slightly different meaning. The Vedantist tries to be a little more subtle. The starting point is the same in both the systems. Both the schools agree that the material world is derived from the five Tanmatras; but they differ with regard to the nature of the Bhutas. Vedanta speaks of two kinds of Bhutas, namely gross and pure. Both these kinds are imaginary. According to Vedanta pure 'Akasha' is that imaginary thing which possesses only the quality of sound and no other qualities. 'Marut' is that imaginary thing which possesses the quality of touch and no other qualities. And so on. It is needless to say that there is no real object in this world which possesses only one quality. All the pure Bhutas are mere abstractions. They only correspond to the five 'Tanmatras'. If we combine the five pure Bhutas in different proportions, the result obtained is a gross (तेजः) 'Bhuta'. In the technical language of Vedanta, each gross Bhuta is made up of four parts of that Bhuta (pure) and one part each of the other four Bhutas (pure). * * * Pure 'Kshiti' has only the quality of smell. In gross 'Kshiti' the quality of smell will be predominant but the other qualities also will be present in a small measure. Gross 'Jala' will have

the quality of taste as the predominant characteristic—with other qualities in a subdued state. And so on. In other words, we obtain the five gross Bhutas by combining the five pure Bhutas in different proportions. This process is technically known as 'Panchikarana'.

It should not be lost sight of that even the five gross Bhutas are mere concepts; because in the physical world we do not meet with any object in which the five qualities can be found in the exact proportions of 4 : 1 : 1 : 1 : 1. Since it is impossible to make any quantitative analysis of the five Tanmatras, who can assert that a quart of milk contains so much of form, so much of taste, so much of smell, so much of touch, and so much of sound? But roughly one can say with regard to each material object that though it contains all the five qualities, some one quality predominates over others. The position, therefore, is this that all material objects are made of the five gross Bhutas mixed in different proportions. Each gross Bhuta in its turn is made of five pure Bhutas.

The methods followed by Samkhya and Vedanta in analysing the world are essentially the same. One must remember that this method is fundamentally different from the method followed by science. It is neither desirable nor possible to reconcile the two methods.

The 'element' of the scientist and the 'Bhuta' of the philosopher have no point of similarity. Therefore one need not feel sorry, grieved or surprised that whereas the modern savants have discovered as many as 90 elements and are discovering more, the ancient philosophers could not conceive of more than five Bhutas only.

One may ask—'What is the use after all of the philosopher's abstractions?' The truths discovered by the scientist are easily intelligible and of practical utility. The wonderful mansion of chemistry built up by Lavoisier and his successors fills one with awe and respect. Its solid foundation inspires a sense of security. How many useful things man is making with the help of chemistry! He is making sweets for the glutton, wine for the drunkard; —and what wonderful colours he is extracting out of black coal tar! He is easily finding out the elements in the sun and the distant stars. But what is the utility of the philosopher's abstractions? What will he do by ploughing the sands? Whom will he invite to dwell in the castles built by him in the air?

I would not attempt to answer these questions now. If I have been able to elucidate the meaning of the word 'Bhuta,' that will be enough satisfaction for me.

INDIAN PHILOSOPHY AND MODERN HINDUISM 267

By Swami Siddheswarananda

[The following is a review of an important publication—"Eastern Lights" by Prof. Mahendra Nath Sircar, M. A., PH. D.; published by Arya Publishing House, 63, College Street, Calcutta; pages 365; price Rs 4 or 8 shillings only. Prof. Sircar's reputation as a leading thinker and interpreter of Indian thought has been well established by his several books on Indian Philosophy and Mysticism. His present book is however of special importance due to its international significance. We hope Swami Siddheswarananda's able summary of it will make our readers interested in this excellent book.]

I

THOUGHTS of thinkers and lives of saints sustain the civilisation of Aryavarta from a historic past. In shaping the face of humanity her continuity in history is an artistic necessity. The shock of conquest and shame of subjection unsettled the even tenor of her life. A catholic understanding required the adjustment of the new forces of culture. The full stature of human greatness stood, once more in India, revealed. The world learnt what really to seek in India, and appraise her true value in the economy of international life. In Shankara and Ramanuja and other Oriental philosopher-saints, critical Europe sought new light to guide its thought and influence its conclusions. Within the last century centres of Oriental learning formed part of European Universities and the place of Indian scholars was properly appraised and honoured. Radhakrishnan and Das Gupta lectured in European Universities. The present volume under review comes within the same group of interest created in modern Indian thought. We have great pleasure in finding Dr. Sircar ably continuing the tradition of his colleagues. The book comprises lectures delivered by the learned professor in Italy and other European Universities

on Indian Philosophy and Modern Hinduism. The great scholar and thinker Geovani Gentile invited Dr. Sircar to deliver the course of lectures. French and German Universities followed suit and as the result we have in these fine studies "planned to exhibit the fundamental ideal in Indian life and culture." We have reviewed Dr. Sircar's other books in these pages as classical products of an academic mind. In this new book entitled "Eastern Lights" Dr. Sircar plays a new role. He adopts a more popular vehicle of expression and interprets the soul of India to Modern Europe. As an ambassador of Indian culture, Dr. Sircar has meritoriously performed his mission. As one reads through the book one gets the impression of a masterly mind grappling with recondite problems, exegetical analyses and synthetic solutions. He often leaves the hinterland of Siddhantic disputations and breathes in the high grounds of experience. This gives his writings a particular setting with an appeal to the academic mind as well to the religious aspirant. Dr. Sircar deals with problems of philosophy from a living centre of interest—life. He efficiently criticises some of the conclusions of western philosophers and shows how the same topics have been solved with

deeper understanding by Indian thinkers. Henri Bergson comes in for a large share of criticism. The French savant "interprets the dynamic expression of Indian life as due to her contact with western civilization. He believes that in India "mysticism in action" is liberated through the influence of Christianity, and Dr. Sircar replies, "Indian spirituality shows infinite phases of life in its richness and fullness, and in them all the chords of life have their full satisfaction. The over-emphasis has produced the erroneous idea that human mind is not alive to dynamic verities."

The book has three main divisions. The first section deals with the spiritual ideas of the Upanishads, Gita, Puranas and Tantras. The second section gives the philosophic ideas in the chapters on Reality, the Beautiful, and Values. The remaining lectures deal with an estimate of the cosmic Man, and the contribution to modern Hinduism by four towering personalities of the XIXth century — Rammohan, Dayananda, Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. The book is concluded with a fine thesis on Sri Aurobindo's philosophy of life.

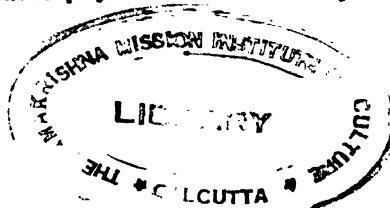
II

(a) The Upanishads search after Truth more through life than intellect. Self is Truth—self-conscious and self-luminous. Life has infinite urges reflecting Truth, may not be in completeness but conceived in Truth. Psychic forces remove the plasticity of matter. Mind is matter in subtle form. Truth has no dimensions. Psychic powers do never give redemption which only knowledge can. Self is Sat-Chit-Ananda, the ultimate concept in the Upanishads. Vaishnavas do not see beyond life's dynamism. Upanishads present both dynamic expression as well as static silence. Bergson fails to see the dignity

of silence. Expression is the principle of self-limitation of Iswara. Upanishads give both the religious and metaphysical approach to Reality—the "path of indirect and direct attainment of Truth." Freedom implies complete self-transcendence beyond the "bounds of space and stream of time." "The bondage comes because of our tendency to seek a cause" due to the urges of the "unenlightened intellect."

They read the life's rational in creation and a creator. Such a God does not represent the Truth of the Upanishads. It is "a concession to human ignorance." Truth recognises no gradation of Reality. Maya synthesises the Supra-cosmic and the cosmic. "Cosmic is the concentration of transcendence." It is more seeming than real. Truth is creative from the cosmological, redemptive from theological, and is finally Supra-cosmic from epistemological standpoint.

The chapter on Upanishads is concluded by a reference to the Avasthas, the four states of consciousness—waking, dream, deep-sleep and Turiya. "A man returning from deep sleep does not return with the illusoriness of time, the man returning from the state (Turiya) does so return" (p. 21). All philosophers may not agree with Dr. Sircar in grouping Turiya as an Avastha. It is called an Avastha only by courtesy. The negation of the two-sense consciousness is a religious experience of the transcendental state of Samadhi. Philosophy is a critic of every experience, mystic or otherwise. As experience the absence of timeless state can be grouped as an Avastha by religion. But the report of the illusoriness of time which that state claims to bring must prove its credentials by explaining the world with which alone philosophy is concerned. Mystic



perience is a fact in the universe of experience. Philosophy claims to investigate the truth behind all experiences. Truth is *Vastu Tantra*. Any single reference cannot issue a copyright of truth.

(b) The Gita is the philosophy of the synthesis of thought. Its discipline is harmony. It is a book of philosophy and inspiration. It avoids extreme theories and blends them in harmony. In Gita we find three main conflicts properly approached and perfectly resolved : (1) The conflict between nature and man. All nature is spirit thrown out. " Matter is spirit with its radiance dimmed and elasticity restrained" (p. 24). (2) The second conflict is between nature and finite spirit. Nature is made the handmaid of spirit. " Man becomes superman if he can control, regulate and put to his use the natural forces that are working within him." (3) The third conflict is between the finite soul and the Divine. The problem is answered by " characterising the soul as belonging to the Para, the superior nature of the Divine" (p. 27). Finite souls are conscious, nature has no consciousness. The Gita affiliates the finite soul to the Divine.

The Gita conceives the Divine descent in two ways : original descent in creation and the timely descent for divine interference in cosmic adjustment (p. 31). Sense of agency binds man to the effects of Karma. Gita seeks to free souls from the mazes of desires. It explains the superman, the behaviour-pattern of the Jivan-Mukta. The Gita exhibits God as Power, Love and Consciousness. Dr. Sircar emphasises the power aspect of the Gita over the love aspect. The Bhagavata Purana reverses the scale and love reigns supreme as the mightiest expression of power. Dharma

deals with ethical values. Gita synthesises the doctrines of Karma, Jnana, Yoga and Bhakti. Through all the processes of Yoga " spirit offers to throw off the individualistic sense and in free offering there is spontaneous reception (p. 43). The discipline of Swadharma helps spiritual unfoldment. In that process there is dedication to and dynamic identification with the Divine.

(c) The Bhagavata Purana represents a fuller synthesis of knowledge, Yoga, devotion and action. Its place is next to the Upanishads and the Gita. It emphasises the concrete Divine (p. 54), the spiritual dynamism over spiritual calm (p. 56). The expression of power is far below spirit's expression as love (p. 58). The Bhagavata does not give a high place to aspirants who are anxious to " transcend history completely and pass into silence" (p. 61). Grace redeems and impresses the finest harmony by pouring in the sweetness of the Divine (p. 63). " The Bhagavata considers such spirituality as the highest divine expression and possibility " (p. 63).

(d) Tantras emphasise the fundamental tendency that Truth is more " to be realised in life." They accept the Upanishadic doctrine of correspondence between the psychic and cosmic forces (p. 69). The Tantras deal with the spiritual science " which finds out the path of realisation " (p. 69). Hence they are very practical. Their methods are essentially psychological and not logical or metaphysical. The Tantras are disciplines. Evolution begins when Shakti manifests. Will is the dynamism of the Sakala Siva or Jiva Shiva. Isvara of the Vedanta is different from Sakala Siva which is erroneously identified as the individual will. " Before one can realise Niskala Siva or Parama Siva one has to pass through the finer stages of revelation that take place

when the cosmic dynamism becomes active in us (p. 74). Shakti has three channels of manifestation as creative, preservative and withdrawal forces. They are called Brahmi, Lakshmi and Sivani aspects of the Mother Force. Evolution is a descent, a downward movement. There is no qualitative difference in the evolutes (p. 79). Matter is energy checked in its creative flow. The Pasu Bhava Sadhakas take Vedic, Vaishnava and Shaiva Bhavas; the Viras adopt Dakshina and Varpa disciplines; and the Divyas are adherents of the Siddanta of Kaul (pp. 88-89). The Tantras offer unique disciplines through these Bhavas and Acharas to wake up the finer dynamism of spirit. Satisfaction of desires is not anathematized. The desires are sublimated. The Tantric solution of the problem of evil could have been given a better scope in the section. The religious aspirant cannot gain Shanti as long as evil confronts him and demands satisfactory solution.

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III

(a) Dr. Sircar opens his chapter on Reality by weighing the relative claims of reason and intuition. Indian mind has not subordinated the claims of intuition in determining the nature of Reality (p. 92). Intuition is the direct worship of truth. Dr. Sircar quotes Prof. Whitehead: "Intuition is a private psychological habit and is without general evidential force." "Intuition is a function of rare and exceptional moments" (p. 92). A long drawn battle is still being waged between those who contend that reason is the final court of appeal and those who stand for the varieties of intuition. Pure philosophy gives the palm to reason while the mystics "claim immediate awareness" in intuition and say that in philosophy "the evidential

character of propositions must stop and point to their self-evidence and self-consistency" (p. 93). Dr. Sircar says that the criterions of Truth "are self-sufficiency which reason finds out, and self-awareness which intuition reveals" (p. 93). "Reason, of course, cannot formulate judgments in conformity with intuition, but the finest rational construction must ultimately be in harmony with intuition" (p. 93). Dr. Sircar appears to be divided in his allegiance to philosophy and mysticism. His philosophic outlook definitely makes him admire the claims of reason: but the deep fervour of mysticism in him makes the book very interesting to religious aspirants, and definitely makes him side with intuitive approach. He disqualifies philosophy to lay hands on the contents of the mystic experiences and says, "Philosophy is never committed to integrate all experiences" (p. 94). But in another place he makes amends for this statement by telling, "Philosophy builds up by observing and accepting the full facts of life". Indian philosophy takes into consideration, the ecstatic experience of Samadhi also (p. 95). But beneath this apparent divided loyalties, one can clearly see the profile of the philosopher in spite of the luxuriant language he uses to placate the mystic's position. Dr. Sircar's intuition is evidently the Vedantic Reason—that which gives the final certainty to all experiences by resolving all forces of contradiction in the centre of Buddhi. The intuition of common parlance should not be confused with the learned professor's use of the term. It is too dangerous to measure Truth with it. The intuition of common parlance is an impressionism whose roots are hidden in the 'logic of the sub-conscious or the unconscious, to use Dr. Bradley's term, whose sudden

jets through the layer of mind is mistaken as a visitation of Truth from the pure region of the soul. The earthly character of such intuitions gives various shapes to it, often one contradicting the other. Such intuitions must ever be judged by reason. But the intuition that springs from Buddhi can have no dual character. As a witness of all modes of consciousness it remains constant, and as the psycho dynamism becomes purer, we get its truer intimations of Reality. As Dr. Sircar's outlook is essentially synthetic, he reconciles the divergent claims of mysticism and philosophy by claiming the former as a discipline and the latter as a way of life. A more detailed treatment of the tests of truth in this section would have been helpful in understanding the problem of Reality.

Dr. Sircar's study of the Indian conception of the Beautiful is very well presented. No student of aesthetics can read it without being better illumined on the topic. Beauty belongs to the dynamic expression of Spirit. The Hindu mind idealises the Real. There are four theories of aesthetics—the objective theory of Bhāṭṭācārya, the subjective theory of Bhaṭṭācārya, the reflex theory of Sanku and the expressionist theory of Abhinava Gupta (pp. 131—133). The whole of life is covered in idealising the real. "There is beauty in Krishna's Rasa dance. There is beauty in Siva's dance of Death" (p. 140). "Nature is the creation of the divine art, and things appear ugly, because the inner meaning and rhythm are not revealed to us". Moral sense is different from artistic sense. "Artistic appre-

ciation is not to be regulated by the sense of ethical fitness". But it is a fact that artistic responsiveness of pure and impure souls are not the same (p. 112). Art educates not only segments of life but illuminates the whole of it. The Divine is the Eternal Kavi.

(c) This section ends by a dissertation on values. The Hindu mind exhibits fine appreciation of the creative values of life. The urge to grow is appropriately termed Dharma. Duty is enlivened by the spirit of dedication. Vital urges require satisfaction. The classical scale of values from Dharma to Moksha through Artha and Karma is referred to, but not explicitly. We wish that this could have been more elaborately worked out. But the whole chapter follows the classical movement of values. Life is a great Yagna—(sacrifice). Evolution is not for self-gratification but self-repression. Dharma occupies the first place in the scale of values. Values become purest when man gains his true birthright i.e., knowledge of Self. The conception of values in different schools of thought brings this valuable chapter to a fitting conclusion.

IV

The last section is a brilliant character study of the outstanding personalities of modern era and their contribution in vitalising true spiritual life in India. On a future occasion we expect to present the reader with Dr. Sircar's scholarly estimate of the surging currents of spiritual forces that have made modern India once again the home of spirituality.

By Swami Thyagisananda

[How to get absorbed in Brahman is described in the following Mantra .

उद्गीतमेतत्परमं तु ब्रह्म तस्मिस्त्वयं सुप्रतिष्ठाऽप्यते च ।

अन्तरम् ब्रह्मविदो विदित्वा लीना ब्रह्मणि तत्परा योनिमुक्ताः ॥

उद्गीत—expressly declared एतत्=this परम्=supreme ब्रह्म=Brahman तस्मिन्=in that तत्परम्=the triad सुप्रतिष्ठाऽप्यते च=the firm support अन्तरम्=imperishable च=and अन्तरम्=here अन्तरम्=the inner essence ब्रह्मविदः=knowers of Brahman विदित्वा=knowing लीना=merged ब्रह्मणि=in Brahman तत्परा=devoted to it योनिमुक्ताः=released from birth (मवन्ति)=are.

This¹ is expressly declared to be the supreme Brahman. In that² is the triad³. It is the firm support⁴ and it is the Imperishable. Knowing the inner essence⁵ of this, the knowers of Brahman⁶ become devoted to it, merge⁷ themselves in Brahman and are released from birth⁸. (7)

Notes : 1. *This* (एतत्):—This may refer to the visible universe inclusive of individual souls or to the Ultimate Reality behind it experienced in Samadhi as the Self of ourselves. In the former case, the first line would mean: "This universe is expressly declared (by the Vedas) to be the supreme Brahman." In the latter case, it means, "The Absolute (experienced in Samadhi) is what is expressly declared (in the Vedas) as the supreme Brahman," i.e., when the Absolute which is beyond thought and language is brought down to the plane of thought and language, it is described as the supreme Brahman or God. Sankara takes the line to mean that the supreme Brahman is described in the Vedas as above the world of cause and effect.

2. *In that* (तस्मिन्):—This refers to Brahman. The triad or the world of difference may be said to exist in Brahman, either in reality as the theists would have it or by way of superimposition as the Advaitins would prefer.

3. *Triad* (त्रयम्):—This may refer to any or all of the following: (1) the Triputi, i.e., the knower, the known and the relation between them, (2) time, space and causation, (3) the Avasthatraya or the states of Jagrat, Swapna and Sushupti, (4) the Trimurti or Brahma, Vishnu and Siva, (5) the Gunatraya or Satwa, Rajas and Tamas, (6) the three aspects of God, namely, Virat, Hiranya-garbha and Sutratma, (7) the three bodies, Sthula, Sukshma and Karana, (8) the three worlds, (9) the three Vedas, (10) the three kinds of actions giving rise to Punya, Papa and Moksha. (11) The Bhokta, Bhogya and Preritri referred to in verse 12. Any way it refers to the phenomenal world.

4. *The firm support* (सुप्रतिष्ठाऽप्यते च):—There is another reading 'स्वप्रतिष्ठा'. The translation is according to the reading given in the text which is adopted by Sankara. The word may mean, 'The Absolute is the substratum of all manifested appearances'; or, 'It is the one support of everything, which always saves them from a fall'; or, 'The whole universe rests in it after Pralaya'. In the last sense,

It may be considered to furnish an answer to the fourth question raised in verse I. It is called the firm support according to Sankara, because everything else is transitory. According to the second reading, the word means, 'established in itself.' Cf. स देवः कस्मिन् प्रतिष्ठितः । स्वं महिसि ॥

5. *The inner essence* (अन्तरम्) :—Cf. Taitiriya अन्तर्दद्वारा आत्मा etc., which describes the method of knowing the inner essence by progressing step by step from the gross body through the subtle and causal bodies.

6. *Knowers of Brahman* (ब्रह्मविदः) :—This refers to those who have understood the significance of Brahman, i.e., the Vedas. Some even have the reading ब्रह्मविदः:

7. *Merge* (लीनाः) :—It may refer to the complete forgetfulness of themselves and their surroundings in the enjoyment of the bliss of Brahman, or, completely becoming one with It as the salt doll merges in the ocean.

8. *Released from birth* (योनिमुक्ताः) :—Free from all evils incidental on birth, old age and death.

The two lines may be summarised thus :—Learning from a study of the Vedas that the Absolute or the Fundamental Reality is in every respect different from the subjective and objective world of our experience, the aspirant tries to come face to face with this Reality by self-analysis and introspection. Once he gets an experience of It in deep Samadhi, he becomes convinced that It is the supreme goal of human endeavour and thenceforward devotes himself to It to the exclusion of all worldly attractions, even after coming out of Samadhi. By continuous practice he becomes completely oblivious of the existence of even himself and the world, and finally becomes lost in the experience of the Absolute. Then he becomes free once for all from the ocean of Samsara.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

A Dangerous Advice

The Conference of the Bombay Presidency Depressed Classes, held at Yeola, Nasik District, on the 13th October marks a sensational development in the agitation of the Depressed Classes for equality of status in the Hindu fold. The newspapers report that a resolution to the effect that the Depressed Classes should completely sever themselves from the Hindu fold and adopt any other religion guaranteeing them equal status and treatment with other members of the faith has been unanimously adopted by the Conference attended by about 10000 people on the advice of Dr. Ambedkar, the

well-known leader of the Depressed Classes.

The reason for this resolve on the part of this section of the community is stated in the presidential address delivered at the Conference. After bitterly recounting the treatment meted out by Caste Hindus to the Depressed Classes, the President remarked that so far, their attempt to bring about a change of heart was futile and therefore a mere waste of energies and money. Complete severance from the Hindu fold was therefore the way of amelioration that he had arrived at after deep reflection. "We shall", he declared "cease our

fight for equality where we are denied it. Because we have the misfortune to call ourselves Hindus, we are treated thus. If we were members of another faith, none would dare treat us so." Dr. Ambedkar supported the resolution, and in asking the Depressed Classes to embrace another faith, left the choice to individuals, saying : "Choose any religion which gives you equality of status and treatment." He concluded, saying, "We shall repair our mistake now. I had the misfortune of being born with the stigma of an untouchable. But it is not my fault. But I will not die a Hindu, for this is in my power."

No true lover of Hinduism and Hindu culture can help feeling aggrieved, not so much because some Hindus are going to adopt other faiths as because they are being forced to do so by certain strange social practices which are in no way essential to Hinduism. The tragedy of the situation is that neither party recognises that there is no integral relation between Hinduism and untouchability. We do not know what the Hindu fundamentalists of this country think of this dramatic development. Perhaps they may feel jubilant that this move on the part of some of these troublesome elements will weaken the anti-untouchability movement in this country and thus help them to keep their Dharma intact. Such an attitude, no doubt, will be quite logical for them to adopt, but it will have its sure and certain nemesis from that much more potent factor known as the logic of life. If however they participate in the feeling of grief and apprehension that the rest of the Hindus entertain, it is time for them to recognise that neither the law of Karma nor the more recently concocted biological inter-

pretation of untouchability is going to satisfy any self-respecting member of the Depressed Classes whose voice we hear in the memorable words of Dr. Ambedkar : "I had the misfortune of being born with the stigma of an untouchable. But it is not my fault. But I will not die a Hindu, for this is in my power."

We must however point out that for the Depressed Classes themselves, this move on the part of Dr. Ambedkar and some educated persons like him is not going to be of any use. Whatever the faults of the caste system may be, one beneficial feature of it has been that when a few of the members of a caste rise in culture and influence, the caste consciousness forces them to work for the amelioration of their whole community. The activities of Dr. Ambedkar and his followers for the uplift of the Depressed Classes form in themselves an illustration of this point. But the step they are now contemplating is going to counteract this healthy influence. By giving up Hinduism these leaders are simultaneously withdrawing their leadership of the Depressed Classes. They will have in future no more chance of serving their community. For, the vast section of this class who are not educated enough to know anything of Dr. Ambedkar or participate in his feelings will doubtless remain where they are, and by becoming a Christian or a Muslim, Dr. Ambedkar and his followers will only lose all points of contact with them. Dr. Ambedkar will thereby be defeating the very cause that is so dear to his heart. Hence, rightly has Mahatma Gandhi remarked in his statement on the resolution in question : "Lastly I am convinced that a change of faith by him and those who passed the resolution will not

serve the cause which they have at heart, for the millions of unsophisticated and illiterate Harijans will not listen to him and them when they have disowned their ancestral faith, especially when it is remembered that their lives, for good or evil, are intertwined with those of Caste Hindus."

Another Depressed Class Leader's Challenge

There are not however wanting among the Depressed Classes, leaders of more mature wisdom who realise the fatal implications of the course suggested by Dr. Ambedkar and his followers. Rao Bahadur R. Srinivasan, M. L. C., a well-known leader of the Depressed Classes, remarks in his statement that the advice of Dr. Ambedkar and the resolution of the Conference came to him as a thunderbolt. His statement runs : "Conversion to other faiths will weaken the numerical strength of the Depressed Classes and encourage oppressors. It will not be possible even in a long period of ten years for the whole of the Depressed Classes to embrace some other religion. The best advice to be given to these classes is to keep up their strength and fight for their rights and privileges from where they are, treating the Caste Hindus as untouchables. That is manly. Those that are not able to face their enemies and treat them as untouchables, let them emigrate to some other country where there is no untouchability."

There is no doubt that the extract given above brings into full prominence the danger that threatens the social interests of the Depressed Classes by the hasty and dangerous advice given by leaders like Dr. Ambedkar. However indignant a leader might be, he should not sacrifice the best interests of his followers merely to satisfy his feeling

of wounded self-respect or his spirit of revenge. It is in this respect that Dr. Ambedkar and his followers are blundering, and Mr. Srinivasan's warning is a timely corrective to this disastrous manifestation of self-respect.

We must however remark that even in Mr. Srinivasan's statement, the bellicose attitude goes beyond the bounds of propriety. A sense of indignation is quite legitimate and understandable in a situation like this. But to advise the Depressed Classes to treat all Caste Hindus as untouchables is not however the way of wisdom. When Mr. Srinivasan says so, his sense of self-respect seems to smother his prudence and recommend a course of action that will be detrimental to the interests of the Depressed Classes themselves. For there is a large section of Caste Hindus who are sincerely anxious to help the Depressed Classes and who spare neither their energy nor their purse in working for their uplift. To treat them at least as untouchables will be against the best interests of the Depressed Classes. Moreover the cultural elevation of their rank and file can take place only by closer association with, and not by segregation from, the Caste Hindus.

But what is most unsatisfactory in the attitude of both Dr. Ambedkar and Mr. Srinivasan is their failure to recognise that religion has a much greater significance than the social and political prizes available through it. For both of them overlook the fact that besides being a social system, Hinduism is also a spiritual gospel, and that when one chooses either to remain within its fold or leave it, the first consideration ought to be the spiritual values that are attached to it. This point has been well stressed by Mahatma Gandhi in his criticism

of Dr. Ambedkar's attitude: "If Dr. Ambedkar has faith in God, I would urge him to assuage his wrath and reconsider the position and examine his ancestral religion on its own merits and not through the weakness of its unfaithful followers." This recognition of the spiritual worth of religion does not however mean that, as some fundamentalists often urge, they should put up with all the insults and humiliations heaped on them in the blessed name of the *Sastras*. They must agitate and with the co-operation of the more liberal sections of Hindus try to purge their religion of these social poisons. This, and not Dr. Ambedkar's advice to abandon Hinduism, is the counsel of wisdom for the Depressed Classes to follow.

The Spirit of Hindu Social Institutions

In an article on the "Caste system of the Hindus" appearing in the July number of the *Hindustan Review*, Prof. Gulshan Itai unravels some of the important principles involved in the system. He points out that we can gain a real insight into the system by understanding the significance of the two words 'Varna' and 'Jati.' Varna, according to him, was not a division based on colour at all. It was purely an occupational classification, and the four well-known *Varnas* of Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Sudra indicated only the professions followed by the different groups. As distinguished from this was the Jati which was based solely on birth, and reflected the dislike of Indians to mix their blood with foreign elements. Prof. Rai maintains that according to the Indian social system it was the Jati that was unchangeable, not the Varna. A Jati or ethnic group classed in one Varna on the basis of profession used however to change the Varna

by the change of profession; but in ancient India where the family or the community, and not the individual, was the social unit, such changes used to be effected not by an individual's passing from one *Varna* to another but of the whole family or community doing so. Thus while the Jati of a group remained fixed, it rose or fell in the social scale in accordance with the change in the occupation of the people belonging to it.

Prof. Rai points out that it was through the institutions of Jati and Varna that all the Pre-Muslim invaders of India were absorbed by the Hindu society. The foreigners for sometime after their invasion used to be soldiers and administrators, and thus occupied the rank or *Varna* of Kshatriyas, although they might not be recognised as such by the indigenous Kshatriyas. But when they lost political power, they were compelled to adopt other professions, and according to the professions they adopted, they became sub-divisions of different *Varnas*, these sub-divisions of each *Varna* having marriage relations only among themselves and not with other sub-sects of the same *Varna*. Thus the foreigner gradually and imperceptibly got absorbed in the indigenous social organisation, but at the same time through the institution of Jati which is often identified now-a-days with sub-sect the conservative elements safeguarded themselves from intermixture of blood with foreigners.

How to Hinduisce India

From these observations regarding Jati and Varna and the manner in which they helped the indigenous population to absorb foreign invaders, Prof. Rai proceeds to consider how Hindu society can in future absorb Muslims and Christians who have till now stood

outside Hindu social system. He says : " If in olden times our culture was adopted by other races, it was not adopted by individuals, but by families and groups of families. This group of families formed an endogamous unit of its own. It constituted a separate Jati, which after a few generations formed a sub-section of an Aryan Varna. The present-day method of individual conversion or Suddhi is therefore repugnant to Hindu way of thought. If we failed in modern times to absorb foreign races, it is due to two reasons. So long as the Muslims ruled the country, they held a kind of political importance which prevented them from sinking to the level of other peoples in the land. This Muslim political supremacy was not overthrown till about 200 years back which barely constitutes six or seven generations. During these two centuries India was overtaken by dark ages, and she passed through a period of civil wars, bloodshed and disturbances. Peace and tranquillity have been established only during the last one hundred years, which means hardly three or four generations. We have had no time during this period to study our social problems and find a solution for them. But one thing is clear. Western method of conversion will not do. The one most important lesson that was learnt in connection with the Suddhi movement of the Malkana Rajputs, was that you could not re-convert them unless you assured them that they could be taken by their caste biradaries. This is a clear verdict against individual conversion. If we are to reabsorb those whom we have lost and absorb amongst us fresh foreign elements, which are not very numerous, we should reject the Muslim and Christian missionary methods, and revert to our

ancient well-tried national methods. That method consisted in distributing the alien elements in one population into our pre-existing economic groups in accordance with the natural affinity of each foreign ethnic unit. This task has to a very great extent been already accomplished. The next step would be taken when the Hindu religious leaders take up the work of studying foreign non-Aryan religions, and then after a comparative study of these different faiths and methods of worship, come to find out how these different principles could be reconciled, and a synthetic whole created out of them. This process was started by men like Kabir, Nanak and others, but it was stopped by the disturbed period that intervened. This work should be re-started. The old Hindu religion sticking to its old fundamental principles, has from time to time assumed new shapes. We have absorbed the culture and religion of the Pre-Aryans. We have absorbed the most important principles of Jainism and Buddhism. We have probably absorbed the cults of the Central Asian invaders. I am sure we will also absorb those principles of Islam and Christianity, which are best suited for Indian conditions. When we have done that, it would be time to absorb even culturally the foreign elements we now have amongst us. But it will take a few generations more, if we begin the task in right earnest now. How all this is to be done must be left not to the bigoted Pandits and Mullahs of to-day but to the intelligent students of comparative theology."

Prof. Rai's suggestions are no doubt very profound and thought-provoking, and deserve the serious consideration of all well-wishers of Indian culture. We however feel that Prof. Rai overlooks one

important fact. Muslims and Christians are not like the Yuchiis, Huns and other hordes from Central Asia. The latter had no culture of their own and the religions they professed were very primitive with no universal appeal in them. It is comparatively easy for a higher culture like that of the Hindus to absorb such people. But the case of Muslims and Christians is quite different. They, especially the Muslims, have a long-standing and historic culture of their own, and the religions they both profess have a deep spiritual appeal and are

buttressed by powerful organisations. Moreover they are religiously self-conscious, jealous and aggressive, and are out to swallow what they call the unbelieving population in this country. Would it not be necessary to make radical changes in the old methods in order to meet the entirely new situation? We for our part believe that no attempt at absorption can succeed unless the social outlook of the modern Hindu broadens and his allegiance to the essential principles of religion becomes deeper.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

KALYAN-YOGANKA (HINDI) : Published by Manager, Kalyan, Gorakpur, Pages 884. Price Rs. 3.

It is a delight to go through the special number of the Hindi Monthly Kalyan giving an exhaustive treatment of the various aspects of Yoga. The volume is excellently planned and executed and is an improvement upon the previous year's number in bulk and worth. The reader is regaled with a brilliant array of essays, excerpts and poems closely relieved by several charming coloured plates and instructive diagrams numbering over 400. We wish an extensive circulation for this superb issue which is bound to leave a holy impression upon any reverent mind.

(1) A TEXT-BOOK OF ELEMENTARY ECONOMICS. (2) A HISTORY OF INDIA : By K. S. Srikantan, M.A., F. R. E. S. Published by Messrs. V. S. Swaminathan, Madura.

Prof. S. K. Srikantan has done a great service to the cause of education in South India by writing his very useful text-book on "Elementary Economics," suited to the needs of students in the Intermediate Class. The author explains in lucid language the fundamental conceptions on which the economic sciences is based and ably presents the theory

underlying the varied economic activities of the modern world. The appendices at the end of the book deal with such diverse subjects as advertisements, economic planning, factory labour, the silver doabao, population problem, foreign trade, Income-tax, etc., most of which seem to be reproductions of the author's contributions to the various journals. There are a few plates and figures which add to the value of the book. An index would further enhance the value of the book.

V. B.

The second of these books is a History of India that will serve as an excellent text-book for students studying in the upper forms of our Secondary Schools. The author has embodied the results of the recent researches in Indian History and has kept in view the topical method in the presentation of the material. It is noteworthy that a chapter on the Indian States and another on the growth of Indian polity and culture through the ages have been included in the book. The book contains seventeen maps and a few illustrations. The publishers could have very well included a few more illustrations such as the Rathas at Mahabalipuram, specimens of Dravidian, Chalukyan and Indo-Aryan Architecture and a few illustrations in colour.

V. V

NEWS AND REPORTS

A Vedantic Teacher Honoured

Swami Prabhavananda and Sister Lalita (Mrs. Carrie Moad Wyckoff) were given a farewell address by the members and friends of the Vedanta Society of Hollywood, at the Vivekananda Home, 1946 Ivar Avenue, on Sunday, August 13th, 1935, on the eve of their departure for India. Dr. Percy Houston, Vice-President of the Society, presided and read the following address on behalf of the members of the Society:

"The departure for India of our beloved Swami Prabhavananda and of our beloved Sister Lalita marks the end of the first stage in the history of The Vivekananda Home. It seems natural, therefore, as we bid them farewell, that we should recall to mind the events which led to the founding of this distant Mission, and express our earnest appreciation of what these two have accomplished for our good and for the dissemination of religious truth.

"It was in 1927 that Swami Prabhavananda, then stationed in Portland, Oregon, first came to Los Angeles. He came here to lecture on the Hindu religion. During his stay here Sister Lalita, together with some other devotees, asked him to form a centre in Hollywood. Her pious wish was not immediately fulfilled. When Swami Prabhavananda returned to Portland, Sister Lalita followed him there, and remained with him for a year. Later, in 1929, she prevailed upon him to carry out her desire. She offered him her home, where we are now gathered together, as the home of the new Mission. Her offer was accepted, and 1946 Ivar Avenue took the name of our revered Swami Vivekananda.

"Swami Vivekananda was to Sister Lalita far more than a name, far more even than the author of religious writings, for she had known him personally. In the year 1900, she became a devotee of the Vedanta, and entertained its great apostle in her home. The record of the friendship of these two may be read in the book of Vivekananda's life entitled *Swami Viveka-*

nanda: by His Eastern and Western Disciples. To acquaintance with the first of Vedanta's spokesmen in the West, she has added, with the passing years, an acquaintance with nearly all the Swamis who have succeeded him. To the younger among these she has been in the place of a mother.

"A year ago, not content with what she had already done for the cause of Vedanta in the West, she made a legal gift of her house to our Society, which then for the first time became formally incorporated.

"Of Sister Lalita, what now shall we say as we bid her farewell? She, of herself, we well know, would have us say nothing. But we cannot consent to such a silence. She has come to mean to us a great thing, and we must express our thought. She has become for us the symbol of what Vedanta may do for western women. Under its benign influence her life has been a fitting ideal towards which other women may strive, and in her egolessness, her humility, her sweet simplicity, and her love, she has been a shining example for all.

"Concerning Swami Prabhavananda, likewise, we must unburden our hearts. He has been these many years our constant inspiration. From the depths of the brooding East, mother of religions, he has brought us words of highest truth. From his lips we have understood as we could never have understood from the pages of books alone. In him we recognize the guru of immemorial tradition, the teacher, the master, the indispensable medium through which the hard-won secrets of divine wisdom are transmitted from generation to generation. From his lips we hear the precept; in his pure life we see the precept embodied. Words and works in him are one. The man as he lives among us is therefore proof and illustration of the doctrine he inculcates. Our debt to him is great—greater than we can ever repay; and because of him our debt to India is likewise great, in that she has sent

him to us, one of her noblest sons. Because of him we understand India better, love her more deeply.

"These things it was necessary for us to say of our beloved Swami Prabhavananda.

"But now, as we dwell upon what our leader has done for us, and mean' to us, we are reminded that without Sister Lalita's devotion to Vedanta we might never have enjoyed his presence. Let us unite them in our words and thoughts as we say to them from the bottom of our hearts,—Godspeed!"

Dr. Houston then called upon Sister Lalita to say a few words. In response, she said : "This was all a great surprise to me. I hardly know what to say. It has been my blessed privilege to know Swami Vivekananda, and through him to have known most of the Swamis who came after him." She also expressed her joy in being with Swami Prabhavananda, and her happiness in the association of his students. Swami Prabhavananda's reply was as follows : "Words seem inadequate to express the gratitude and thankfulness for all the love and kindness I have received at your hands. I came to America a stranger in a strange land; but never for a moment did you and your people make me feel that I was a stranger. You accepted me as a brother of your own. I have also adopted your country as my mother country, and I have learnt to love my adopted mother as much as I love my own Mother India.

An Englishman wrote a verse which has unfortunately been oft-quoted : "East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet." But I assure you from my long experience in the West that this is not true. If only we left the veil of ignorance and prejudice, we shall find the same human heart beating in the breasts of all.

True it is, however, that the cultural life of the East and that of the West moved along different lines. But the greatest thinkers of the East and of the West believe to-day that the time has come when the East and the West must meet together and for the betterment of humanity, must join hands and assimilate the culture of each other.

We of the East have to learn of material things from you, and you of the West have to learn of the Spirit from us. This message of the Spirit and of Soul Consciousness, I brought to you from India and I have given this message to you in my humble way.

"As you are aware, since the dawn of civilization, India has held on to the belief that God can be realized, that the Kingdom of Heaven within can be reached in this life. India has always felt this summons of the Infinite and at no time in her history has India been without great souls who have actually realised God. "Again, a greater awakening has come in India in the past hundred years, since the advent of our Great Master Ramakrishna—perhaps greater than the greatest awakening India has ever witnessed. Sri Ramakrishna and his disciples have brought a new era in the history of India. And I have had the blessings of one of the greatest disciples of the Master—one who to me was a Man-God. I have touched the hallowed feet of one who became one with God. It is impossible for me to reveal to you in so many words anything of my Master. But I want you to understand that if my words have helped to quicken the Spirit within any one of you, I take no credit for myself—but blessed be the name of him, whose humble servant I am. In conclusion, I must say, I am glad I am going to India, but I will be glad again to be back, for you have become very dear to my heart."

In conclusion, Dr. Houston added these remarks : "May I say personally how very much the association with the Swami has meant to me? Not only have I profited by attending his lectures, but I have a close friendship with him which I hope will be permanent. I have come here week after week to enjoy lectures which sweep clear away the emotionalism which perhaps we have been used to in our churches, and strike at the root of truth itself. Not only has the Swami clear perceptions of spiritual truth, but he has a fine mind. I hope he will return to us full of added inspiration for our future benefit."

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Let me tell you, strength is what we want, and the first step in getting strength is to uphold the Upanishads and believe that "I am the Atman"

Swami Vivekananda

THE VEDANTA KESARI

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DECEMBER, 1935

[No. 8

HINDU ETHICS

॥ ३० ॥

शिष्टाचारः प्रियो येषु दमो येषु प्रतिष्ठितः ।
सुन्त दुःखं सम्य येषां सत्यं येषां परायणं ॥
दातारो न प्रहीतारो दयावन्तस्तयेन च ।
पितृदेवातिथेयाथ नित्योशुक्लास्तयेव च ॥
सर्वोपकारिणो वीराः सर्वधर्मानुगामकाः ।
सर्वभूतहितार्थैः सर्वदेवायाथ भाग्यतः ॥
न प्रासिनो न चपलाः न गौद्राः सत्यं स्थिताः ।
ते सेव्याः साधुभिर्भित्यमसाध्याः विवर्जयेत् ॥

An aspirant after virtue should, O, descendant of Bharata, always seek the company of people who are fond of enlightened behaviour, who have thoroughly mastered their passions, who accept the turns of fortune with an even mind, whose foot is truth, who are full of loving kindness, who though munificent in giving gifts are averse to accept any from others, to whom their parents are visible deity, who are hospitable, who are constantly persevering, who are keen at doing a good turn to all, who are heroic hearts and observers of Dharma in its entirety, who, intent upon gift, never hold back anything, who are fearless, steady and sweet-tempered and who never waver from the true path. On the other hand dis-honourable men should always be kept at a distance.

SANTI PARVA, CH. 158, VERSES 23, 24, 25 & 27.

By Swami Saradananda

[The reader will find herein illustrations of certain laws governing the state of Samadhi.]

*The unflinching nature of
Mathuranath's devotion was the
effect of his testing the Master on
numerous occasions*

ALTHOUGH Mathuranath's intense devotion may appear to us as something very unusual, nevertheless it is beyond all doubt that it was an outcome of his testing the Master on many an occasion. He found that the temptations of enormous wealth, of charming women, of the prospect of gaining absolute control over himself and his family, and of handsome gifts to his relatives like Hriday and others could not in any way divert the Master's mind to worldly pre-occupations, as in the case of ordinary men. An external show of piety could not hide its true nature for a long time from the penetrating vision of the Master; but if any one took refuge in him with a sincere heart even after committing grave sins, the Master would receive him cordially, forgive him all his faults, and bestow on him the power to conceive higher and higher ideals and realise them in life. Through the miraculous power of the Master, even the impossible would become possible for his devotees.

*Mathuranath desires to attain
ecstasy*

Living in the Master's company and finding him enjoying infinite bliss in the state of Samadhi, Mathuranath, worldly-minded

though he was, once felt the desire to have a similar experience for a while just to see what it was like. Mathuranath was now firmly convinced that the Master was capable of conferring all kinds of spiritual experience on any one by his sheer will. For he thought, "Shiva or Kali the Mother of the Universe, Krishna or Rama by whatever name we may call the Highest Being, is not the Master himself identical with It? What wonder is there then if he can show some of those aspects of his to his devotee?" Certainly, it was not a matter of small importance. Whoever came into close contact with the Master would invariably develop this attitude day by day. All such people were led to believe that even the impossible could be made possible by his will, that he was capable of making any one experience all the truths of the spiritual world at his will. When it is difficult to make even a single soul feel like this through one's spiritual powers and purity of character, what to speak of carrying such conviction to numerous souls! It is possible only for the Avatars or divine incarnations. Among the important proofs of Avatarhood, this one is not the least important. And it was because the prophets fore-saw that in this world of lies, fraud and crookedness much of deceit and false simulation will take place in their name that they proclaimed before all, "After my

passing away many hypocrites will come to you, saying, 'I am the Prophet, the Saviour and the Refuge of weak souls.' Beware! Do not be deceived by their pretensions."

Mathuranath's solicitations to the Master

No sooner did this thought occur to Mathuranath than he approached the Master with the solicitation that he might gain some spiritual experience through his favour. "Well, Father," he entreated, "you must see that I get into an ecstasy." We can fairly guess the Master's reply. As usual with him on similar occasions, he said, "Everything will come in its proper time. Can we expect to see a full-grown tree and enjoy its fruits, simultaneously with the sowing of the seed? Moreover, you are all right now, experiencing both worldly joys and spiritual bliss. If these ecstasies come, your mind will lose all contact with this world. Who will then take care of properties? They will be usurped by any and every cheat. What will you do then?"

The Master tries to change his mind with the illustration of Uddhava, the great devotee of God, and the milkmaids of Brindavan

But who would listen to these warnings? Mathuranath persisted in his importunities—the Father must make him enter into an ecstasy. When the Master found that all his arguments were in vain, he went one step further and said, "Devotees do not like visions. They want only the direct service of the Lord. The visions

make one conscious of God's glories and thereby generate awe, thus throwing the attitude of love into the background. When the Lord Krishna went away to Mathura, the milk-maids of Brindavan became overwhelmed with grief on account of their separation from the Beloved. Knowing their pitiable condition, the Lord sent Uddhava to console them. Now, Uddhava was a Jnani (with the intellectual bent of mind). Hence he could not understand the attitude of the people of Brindavan—the attitude of loving service to the Lord. He would look upon the pure devotion of the milk-maids as something physical and therefore of a low order. Therefore he was specially selected with this object also in view that he would receive further enlightenment from these simple people of Brindavan. After his arrival there he began to argue with the milk-maids, saying, 'Why are you all weeping and wailing while repeating the name of the Lord Krishna? You know He is the Lord of all and present everywhere. It is not possible that He is in Mathura alone and not in Brindavan. Therefore stop your sighs and groans, and closing the eyes look into your hearts just for a while. You will find the Lord ever residing there with His beautiful complexion like that of the clouds, holding the flute between His lips and wearing the garland of forest flowers.' To this the milk-maids replied, 'What is this, O Uddhava, that you are saying in spite of your being an illumined soul and a friend of Lord Krishna? Have we attained Him through meditation, discrimination, or asceticism like the sages and the hermits? We who have fed Him and decorated His person

*Vide Matthew, XXIV, 11, 23, 24, 25, 26.



with our own hands, are we to do the same now in meditation only ? How is it possible for us ? For had our mind been in our possession we might have engaged it in meditation and prayer. But long ago it has been dedicated to the lotus-feet of the Lord. Have we got anything at all to call our own with which we may identify ourselves and then say our prayers ?' Uddhava became stunned with surprise. It was then only that he understood of what quality and depth the devotion of these milkmaids had been, and he returned to Mathura after recognizing them as his spiritual teachers and showing them proper respect as such. Now do you not see from this incident that a genuine lover of God does not want visions ? He finds delight only in the Lord's service. Moreover they do not want visions and other experiences, as they disturb their attitude of pure love." Failing to satisfy Mathuranath even by these words, the Master said at last, "Well, what do I know ? I shall inform the Mother. Let Her do whatever She pleases."

Mathuranath attains Samadhi and again prays to be relieved of it

Just a few days after this, Mathuranath entered into a state of ecstasy. The Master used to recount the incident thus : "He sent for me. Going there I found him quite a changed man. The eyes were red and shedding tears profusely while he was talking of things relating to God, and there was repeated tremor in the chest. The moment he saw me, he clasped both my feet and said, 'Father, I confess my mistake. This state is going on since three days. I cannot attend to the estate affairs even if I try my best. Everything

is being mismanaged. Take back your ecstasy, please ; I don't want it.' 'Why !' said I, 'Did you not hanker after it ?' 'Certainly, I did,' replied he, 'and there is joy in it, too. But what of that ? The whole estate is going to ruins on account of it. Well, Father, your ecstasy befits you alone. We have no need of it. Do take it back, please.' 'Did I not tell you this very thing beforehand ?' I remarked laughingly, whereupon he said, 'True, Father, you did. But how could I know then that it will possess me like a ghost and I shall have to obey its whims for all the twenty-four hours in the day, being unable to do anything independently even if I try ?' Then I passed my hand over his chest to bring him back to the normal state."

The ecstatic states cannot last long in an aspirant who is not a man of renunciation

Indeed, one does not achieve everything by merely entering into an ecstasy. Few are the people who are competent to stand its exacting demands. For it is impossible to be established in that state so long as there persists the least trace of desire exerting its downward pull. That is why the scriptures have enjoined on the travellers along the path of spirituality that they must rid themselves of all desires from the very beginning. They have said, 'एवं अस्ति असृतवान्मनःः By renunciation some attained immortality.' One who has attained Samadhi through a momentary surge of emotion while myriads of desires for wealth, honour and so forth, are still teeming in one's mind, can never retain it for a considerable length of time. Rightly has Sankara, the

great teacher, remarked in the Vivekachudamani :

आपातवैराग्यवतो मुमुक्षुन् भवाविषयां प्रसि-
शतुम् यथान् ।

आपातवाहो मवयसेऽस्मरातो निष्प्रा कर्ते विनि-
वर्त्य वेगत् ॥

—“Those who proceed to cross the ocean of the world without acquiring beforehand the means of genuine renunciation are held back by the neck by the alligators of desire, and perforce drowned in the bottomless waters.”

HINDUISM NOT TO BLAME

{ Does Hinduism recognise the inequality of men? the question has been brought into prominence in some present-day religious controversies. The following is a discussion of this point. }

A Paradoxical Position

THE Indian Press has of late been flooded with statements of leading Indians regarding the threat held out by Dr. Ambedkar that he and his followers of the Depressed Classes have decided to give up Hinduism and embrace some other religion which will give them equality of status. Thanks to the much condemned Communal Award and the consequent recognition of the value of religion in gaining political power in the country. Dr. Ambedkar is naturally receiving the attention of a jostling crowd of political suitors all disguised in religious costumes. The leaders of the Hindus who will be the main losers if the proposed secession takes place have also addressed themselves to Dr. Ambedkar, pointing out to him that change of faith will have no miraculous effect of raising the social and economic status of the Depressed Classes and that its political consequences on their community will be quite disastrous. It has also been pointed out to him that he is misguiding people when he asks them to change their religion out of purely secular considerations, and that if he

abandons Hinduism, he ought to do so after considering its merits and demerits as a religion.

It is generally supposed that the Doctor has left this point entirely out of consideration, and his decision is attributed entirely to a fit of anger and wounded self-respect. This, however, is unfair to the Doctor; for in one of his statements he has stated the reason for his dissatisfaction with Hinduism as a religion. He says referring to Hinduism : “Inequality is the very basis of it, and its ethics are such that the Depressed Classes can never acquire their full manhood... I agree with Mr. Gandhi that religion is necessary, but I do not agree that man must have his ancestral religion if he finds that religion repugnant to his notion of the sort of religion he needs as a standard for the regulation of his own conduct and as a source of inspiration for his advancement and well-being.” Here the Doctor has clearly given his estimate of Hinduism as a religion and it is for the Hindus to say whether this estimate is correct or not. As far as we have seen, only two critics of Dr. Ambedkar’s decision have made references to this aspect of

his statement. One of those is Pandit Malaviya who in a way contradicts the Doctor's statement in the following words : "There is no religion the followers of which do not sometimes fight with each other. There are quarrels among brothers and brothers, one depriving the other of his just rights and possessions. The sin of such quarrels, such wrong and such injustices done by one brother or fellow man to another must not be laid at the door of religion. There is no religion in the world which preaches equality of man in his relation to God, as clearly as the Hindu religion does. If we, followers of our religion, fail to act up to its high and humane teachings, it is we who are to blame and not our religion. The noble teachings of our religion are as much the inheritance of the Depressed Classes as of the rest of Hindus." The other person we refer to is one Sridhara Sastri, described as a representative of priests, who, as is generally the case with persons of his order, declared unhesitatingly at a debate in Nasik that Hinduism recognised inequalities and therefore there could be no question of equal treatment, even though it might mean that Depressed Classes were leaving Hinduism.

The Social and Spiritual Contents of Religions

It is strange that a critic and a defender of Hinduism like Dr. Ambedkar and the representative of the priests respectively should concur on this point, and differ from the view of an enlightened Hindu like Pandit Malaviya. This in itself is an indication that there is much confusion of thought about this matter among the friends as well as the foes of

Hinduism, and a consideration of it in some detail in these pages will not, we suppose, be therefore superfluous.

It is more or less a common feature of all religions that they show a tendency to disregard the natural distinction between their spiritual content and their social forms. Every religion no doubt declares its primary function to consist in guiding man to his spiritual destiny, but rooted as these religions are in particular social environments, their teachings are often bound to compromise with social elements that are sometimes even at variance with their spiritual content. Even in comparatively simple religions like Christianity and Islam this has taken place. In the days of slavery, for example, Christian nations sought justification for that doctrine in the curious idea that slaves have no souls. The religious teachings have also been utilised to enlist the popular sanction in favour of wars, of autocratic States and of the hierarchy of the Church. In Islam too the great teaching that Muslims are brothers has often been utilised by sectarians and interested propagandists to teach hatred of other religionists in the minds of people, and the doctrine of war in defence of religion has been the fruitful source of invasions, plunder, massacres and forcible conversions in the hands of greedy kings and unscrupulous religious leaders. In the case of a religion like Hinduism whose history is to be measured in millenniums and whose origin is not to be traced to any single founder, this liability for confusion between the social forms and spiritual content of religion is all the more great. Perhaps in no religion is there such

divergence of opinion between the fundamentalists and the liberals regarding the essentials and non-essentials of religion as in the case of Hinduism—the former maintaining that all the existing social forms and observances constitute the central core of Sanatana Dharma and the latter that the real Sanatana Dharma is not a bundle of social laws and popular customs but a body of principles governing the relation between God, man and the universe, and sets of moral disciplines and spiritual practices capable of bringing out the divine potentialities of man.

Does Hinduism Recognise the Inequality of Men

Now it is this fundamental difference in outlook, this allegiance to the crystallised social practices on the one hand and the central spiritual content on the other, that is responsible for such divergent opinions on the question of equality in Hinduism. The priest and Dr. Ambedkar both agree that Hinduism recognises inequality, because for both of them caste system forms the very essence of Hinduism, and in caste they see a frank recognition of the social superiority and inferiority of men, culminating in the practice of untouchability of which Dr. Ambedkar's caste men are the victims. It is no doubt true that society everywhere has its gradations of high and low, rich and poor, noble man and common man, and the difference in the natural capacities of individuals too is not a special feature of men in India. But while in other countries these inequalities of life are not justified on religious grounds and are even overlooked under the influence of political theories, here in India

religious speculation has applied itself to a systematisation of these inequalities in some forms and thereby given them a religious garb. Rightly or wrongly it is this alliance between religion and social inequalities as embodied in the caste system which some of the friends as well as the foes of Hinduism have in mind when they characterise it as a religion based on inequalities.

The modern mind would at once flare up with indignation when it is plainly stated about a religion that it does not recognise all men to be equal. Nurtured in the 19th century notions of democracy, with its slogans of liberty, fraternity and equality, it revolts instinctively against the assertion that men are after all unequal. But modern thought is coming to recognise that by merely overlooking the real fact of inequality the interests of the weaker section have only suffered, and the States all over the world are to-day following a policy of giving special protection to the weak in place of allowing unrestricted competition based on the false democratic assumption that all men are equal. The recognition of inequality is not therefore in itself a sin ; the sin or virtue consists in the use made of this recognition. If the recognition of inequality means in practice a justification of the tyranny and exploitation of the weak by the strong, then it becomes an unmitigated evil ; if it is recognised only to afford facilities of growth to the weak, then it becomes a blessing.

We agree with Dr. Ambedkar and the representative of the priests that Hinduism recognises the inequality of men; but we hasten to add that this recogni-

tion is of the latter type, and not of the former kind.

The Conflict of Tendencies

We are sure that the critics of Hinduism will raise a volley of protests against this assertion of ours. Dr. Ambedkar and company who may be counted among such critics will doubtless indignantly point to the various features of caste system and the barbarous doctrine of untouchability as positive proof of the fact that the theory of human inequality has been utilised in this country only to perpetuate the dominance of the strong over the weak under the garb of religious sanctions. Our reply to such criticisms is that these are perversions analogous to the religious justification of slavery among Christian and aggressive wars among Muslim communities, to which we have made reference before. The instinct of self-preservation impels men in power to adopt measures for the defence of their social, political and economic interests, and in a social environment where religion enjoys great prestige in the minds of people, they naturally utilise its teachings for the furtherance of their own class interests. Just as Dr. Ambedkar is criticising Hinduism to-day for its partiality for the strong, religion in every form has for this reason been severely indicted by Communist thinkers as a device of the haves to exploit the have-nots. No man who is sincerely religious and has also made a comparative study of religions will maintain that there is no truth in this charge ; but he will also maintain, as we have done in defence of Hinduism, that this is a form of perversion, and to reject on this account even the spiritual content of religion will be like throwing the baby with the bath.

There are two tendencies in life described in Hindu religious literature as Daivic (divine) and Asuric (diabolical)-- the first tending more and more towards the expression of man's spiritual nature and the other towards suppressing it by various manifestations of selfishness. True religion is always an off-spring of the former, and wherever it is seen to be perverted from its true objective, this will be seen to have taken place under the influence of Asuric tendencies—the selfish, oppressive and grabbing nature of animal humanity. In Hindu socio-religious institutions also these two tendencies have been at work. The institutions of caste and untouchability which have laid Hinduism open to the charge of insisting on inequality among men are themselves examples in illustration of this point. What is at present known as caste is only a crystallisation on hereditary basis of the original ideal of the four Varnas or cultural divisions based on the special aptitudes and tendencies of men. The Brahmana is the man of thought and contemplation, the Kshatriya is one endowed with qualities of leadership, the Vaisya is an enterprising business man and the Sudra is the man who is only fit for subordinate positions under others because of his deficiency in enterprise and intellectual powers. There is no enforced superiority or inferiority involved in this except what the natural gifts of individuals exact recognition from their fellow men. This ideal has, however, been perverted into the institution of caste or Jati which is constituted of innumerable hereditary groups, some of them claiming fancied superiority over others and enforcing preferential treatment from

those who are weaker than themselves. According to the doctrine of Varna superiority or inferiority is entirely a matter of culture and not of birth, and the superior man is he who abandons interest in sensuous life due to his preference for intellectual and spiritual pursuits. He leaves the good things of life for the enjoyment of his cultural inferiors and himself leads a far more abstemious life than the others. In caste, however, the position is reversed, and superiority becomes a matter of open claim on the part of hereditary cliques because of the special material advantages it entitles them to. Varna is a natural aristocracy of virtue and piety while caste is an aristocracy of birth and privileges. The one is a social manifestation of the genuine religious spirit and is therefore born of the Daivie tendency in man. The other, clearly an off-spring of Asurie tendency, is anything but religious, and the responsibility for it should never be laid at the door of Hindu religion.

Now coming to untouchability, it originated in the great disparity in cultural endowment between the main stream of society and the groups of uncivilised people with whom it came into contact. Immediate absorption was impossible. Segregation was adopted as a temporary measure and as an indication that these people required special attention so that they might be culturally prepared for ultimate absorption into the rest of society. As long as Indian culture was in a vigorous and healthy state, this work was being accomplished little by little, and several tribes that were originally beyond the pale of civilised society have been culturally elevated and Hinduised in the true sense of the

term. But the same process of social crystallisation, of the form suppressing the spirit, took place here also as in the case of the institution of Varna. The custodians of culture forgot that certain people have been marked as outcastes only to enable society to bestow special attention for their elevation, just as the Government to-day have classified certain groups of people as Depressed Classes only to mete out preferential treatment to them which they will not get when merged in the rest of society. The small voice of true religion came to be submerged in the clamorous roar of the Asurie tendency in men. Those who ought to have worked for the cultural elevation of the outcastes joined hands with vested interests for whom it was economically advantageous to keep these people in a semi-slavish condition. Out of this unholy alliance between the priest and the capitalist was born the monstrous doctrine of untouchability founded on the fallacious and un-Hindu assumptions that moral degradation of a specially heinous kind is hereditarily transmitted among the outcastes, that this essential sinfulness cannot be redeemed as long as the body lasts, that no educational effort can improve these people, and that the only thing that men of culture can do is to keep sedulously aloof from all social contact with them, of course with the exception of what is required for the purpose of exploiting their labour. The priest sanctioned what the moneyed man wanted, and he got in return the latter's liberal patronage, protection, and unhesitating recognition of holiness.

The Voice of God

But both the parties concerned forgot that they were sinning

against God, and that their theories were in direct contravention of the revelation of God to the Hindu race. For in the Gita the Bhagawan has declared : "I am the same in all beings, there is none hateful to me nor dear. But those who worship me with devotion—they are in me and I too am in them. Even if the most sinful man worships me and worships no other, he must be regarded as righteous, for he has decided aright. He soon becomes righteous and obtains lasting peace. Proclaim it boldly, O Arjuna, that my devotee never perishes. For those who take refuge in me, O Arjuna, though they are of the womb of sin—women, Vaisyas and Sudras—even they attain to the highest state." If this is of the essence of Hinduism, the assumptions behind the doctrine of untouchability fall to the ground. In the light of these ideas there is no degraded condition that cannot be remedied by proper educational efforts. As we have contended, the grouping of the culturally backward people into a different class becomes significant only in so far as it facilitates special attention being bestowed on them for their uplift. Today the Hindu conscience has come to recognise this, and the modern anti-untouchability movement is the result of it. For, the removal of the very necessity for segregation, and not the perpetuation of it, is the only justification on the part of religion for recognising certain groups of people as culturally backward.

An Illegitimate Use of the Karma Doctrine

It will be interesting to investigate how, in spite of the highly altruistic principles of Hindu religion, there have come into vogue

the peculiar un-Hindu assumptions underlying the present-day practice of untouchability, to which reference has already been made. The mischief is to be traced to a misapplication of the doctrine of Karma. There is the common Hindu belief that the birth of a man and the course of his life's events are influenced by his actions in previous lives. On the strength of this belief the hereditary principle has been applied to the conception of caste, and men are supposed to be born in particular castes, high or low, according to the nature of the Karmas that determine their birth. Hence birth in any caste has been looked upon as an index of one's spiritual stature. The group of castes described as untouchable is specially looked down upon as the dust-bin of humanity, a veritable concentration camp of sinners from whom no higher developments of personality need be expected at least until they give up their present bodies and gain birth in more exalted castes as a result of better Karma. The unholy combination of priests and economic exploiters therefore taught the people that no special educational effort need be undertaken to elevate these classes, and their duty towards them consisted only in keeping as aloof from them as possible. Any one can see that if there ever was a perversion of a great doctrine, here was one. The doctrine of Karma is only meant for the satisfaction of individuals when they see that no visible action of theirs is responsible for their particular fate in life or when they find that matters go beyond their control in spite of their best efforts to prevent it. It is also its purpose to invest men with a sense of moral responsibility for their actions,

to warn them that as they sow, so they reap. Man, however, makes an illegitimate use of the doctrine when he speculates about other people's Karma and seeks justification for his callousness to other people's suffering on the ground that they have merited it due to their Karma. The law of Karma is a concern only of the moral agency at the back of the universe; for man who knows nothing of its mysterious workings, the supreme duty consists in doing all he can for the physical, moral and spiritual well-being of his fellow-men. If he is true to the spirit of Hindu Scriptures, he is to view the sight of suffering and ignorance as a call from the Divine to exercise his altruistic spirit, and not hypocritically justify his own selfishness and lack of human sympathy by invoking the law of Karma. Moreover the idea that a person's caste is an index of his spiritual stature is a doctrine that is seen so often contradicted in life that it requires theological prejudice of an extraordinary type to convince a man of it. No sensible person can doubt that the untouchable castes are in a low state of culture only because of the influence of a hostile environment, and that if this can be changed they can be raised to higher cultural levels like any other people. The principles of Hindu religion are not responsible for their distorted application by interested parties.

Adhikaravada

We have till now been contending that from the social point of view genuine Hinduism insists on the inequality of men only with a view to help the weaker party. Now the social side of a religion is what is most liable to distortion

in the hands of interested parties, and that is why it is so difficult to arrive at the correct intentions behind some Hindu institutions. But our point that the inequalities of men are insisted upon only for the benefit of the weak can be more easily proved by reference to the purely spiritual aspect of religion. There is, for instance, the Hindu doctrine of Adhikaravada according to which different people must have different forms of spiritual practices, higher or lower as the case may be, in agreement with their spiritual competency, because just as a higher lesson will not benefit a boy of a lower standard, an advanced form of spiritual discipline will be beyond the capacity of a man at a lower level of spiritual evolution. To assume the equality of all in this respect from a false democratic sense will be disastrous to the best spiritual interests of people concerned, and every one who knows something of spiritual life will therefore admit the importance of recognising the inequality of men from this point of view. It must, however, be pointed out that the false theory of hereditary competency has been applied even in this sphere, say, when it is declared that only persons of a particular class can take to the order of Sannyas. The theory is so manifestly absurd and contradictory to the spirit of Adhikaravada that in spite of the protestations of the orthodox, the history of asceticism in this country has been an open violation of the hereditary interpretation of this doctrine. Barring a few such exceptions it may be said that the recognition of difference in spiritual competency has been wisely applied in this country, and has been responsible for the richness of Indian religious

tradition in diverse forms of spiritual practices suited to the needs of various grades of spiritual aspirants. This is the secret of the rich harvest of spiritual personalities, of sages, saints and incarnations that the religious soil of India has produced. Religions which overlook differences in the spiritual capacities of men and prescribe a standardised form of belief and discipline have always been deficient in this respect, although they may show a remarkable capacity for organisation and for infusing a

dogmatic zeal into their followers. To shut one's eyes to the obvious facts of life is not certainly the way to human welfare.

Hence to conclude, we agree with Dr. Ambedkar and the priest referred to before, that Hinduism does recognise the inequality of men. But the spirit behind this recognition is quite different from what they have in mind. It is not for the exploitation of the weak but for bestowing special attention to their requirements.

REMINISCENCES OF THE HOLY MOTHER

By A Disciple

We are resuming the publication of the reminiscences of the Holy Mother, which was stopped for the time being in order to make space for some serials shorter than it. In these reminiscences of a great woman of modern India, the reader will get intimate glimpses of a glorious type of Indian womanhood revealed through the little acts and simple talks of every day life.]

IT was morning when I went to the Udbodhan office. The Holy Mother was peeling the fruits for the worship. As soon as her eyes fell upon me, she said, "I am so glad to see you here. It is the day of the Bodhan." (I had entirely forgotten about it). Please arrange these flowers for the worship of Sri Ramakrishna, and keep the fruit-tray on this side." I obeyed her orders. After I had arranged the flowers and the fruits, the Mother went to the adjacent room. It was time for her bath. She brought her comb and an oil-pot and sat by my side. I hesitated to touch her head. Just

like a girl she said, "Please comb my hair." This removed my hesitation. After her bath, Radhu came there and said, "I shall have my breakfast of curd and flattened rice." Radhu's breakfast was made ready there. The Mother ate a grain of it and handed the rest to her niece. After I had finished combing the Mother's hair, I began rubbing her body with the oil. The Mother said, "Several young men went to Jayarambati for initiation; but I could not fulfil their desire. With utmost fervour they said, 'Please give us a little of the dust of your feet. We shall preserve it in an amulet!'" Such was their devotion and faith!"

While combing, a number of her hairs came out. The Mother said,

*The day previous to the commencement of the Hindu festival the Durga Puja.

"Here you are ! Preserve these." I felt myself really blessed. I had a strong desire for some of her hair.

Then I accompanied the Holy Mother to the Ganges for her bath. After returning home, she finished the morning worship and then distributed the Prasadam. That took a great deal of time.

Shyamadas Kavira, the celebrated physician, came to examine Radhu. The Holy Mother sent me to find her. After a while Rash Behary Maharaj invited the physician upstairs. When the examination was over, the Mother asked Radhu to bow before the physician. Radhu did as she was asked. After the physician had left the place some one inquired, "Is the physician a Brahmin ?"

Mother : No, he is a Vaidya.

Devotee : Why, then, did you ask Radhu to bow down before him ?

Mother : Why should she not do so ? The physician is so full of wisdom. He is equal to a Brahmin. To whom should one bow down if not before him ? What do you say, my child ?

The food-offering to Sri Rama-krishna was over. The Holy Mother finished her meal. We all sat down for our lunch. The Mother said to me, "Tais Dal has been nicely cooked. You will enjoy it"

It was time for her to take a little rest. So as not to disturb her, we went to the next room. She said, "Look here, the doors and windows are shut. The heat is unbearable. Please open the windows." I carried out her command. After a little while she left the room. The afternoon offering to the Master was made in the Shrine. The Mother sat on a small carpet on the northern

verandah of the Shrine-room. I was seated by her quietly. Suddenly I saw some grey hair near her forehead. I felt sorry that I had not removed them in the morning. The Mother echoed my thought and said, "Please remove the grey hairs from my head." I removed many of them. It was now time for the devotees to pay their respects to the Holy Mother. My carriage was at the door. I had to go to our Kalighat home. It was painful for me to think that henceforth it would not be possible for me to visit the Holy Mother every day. I prostrated before her. She said, "If possible come on the Mahasthami Day."

It was the sacred day of the Mahasthami. My sister and I arrived at the Udbodhan office early in the morning. After a while, a few women devotees brought some flowers. They worshipped the Holy Mother and went to the Ganges for their bath. The Mother asked me, "Will you stay here to-day ? It is the day of the Mahasthami." I answered in the affirmative. A few moments later, revered Sarat Maharaj (Swami Saradananda) came there to salute the Mother. We retired into the next room. The Mother was seated on the bed with her feet resting on the ground. Many devotees came and bowed before her.

Later on, we went to take a bath in the Ganges in the company of Maku and other women-devotees. The Mother said she would finish her bath at home, as rheumatism prevented her from bathing in the Ganges every day. After returning we saw many women-devotees worshipping the Holy Mother.

*The second day of the Durga-Puja which is considered very auspicious by the Hindus of Bengal.

Many of them brought new cloths as an offering. After the worship, they wrapped the body of the Mother with the cloths, as they do with the image of Kali at Kali-ghat. Then she laid the cloths aside, one by one. To some devotees the Mother would say, "It is a nice piece of cloth."

A Brahmachari came to the room and said that the men-devotees would come now to bow down before the Mother. What an impressive sight! With flowers, full-blown lotuses and Bael leaves in their hands, the men-devotees came there one by one, and after worship and salutation, went away. Some time passed in this manner. The members of Balaram's family came and worshipped the Holy Mother. I was the last to go to her. After the worship I wrapped her body with the cloth, when she said suddenly, "I will wear that cloth, as to-day I must put on a new one." She at once put on the cloth given by me. This brought tears to my eyes. After all, it was an ordinary piece of cloth. There were so many costly cloths around her. I was the poor daughter of the Mother. Her excessive affection for me made me bashful. The Mother said, "What a fine border this cloth has!"

A woman dressed in an ochre robe worshipped the Mother and placed two rupees near her feet. The Mother said, "Goodness! Why should you do that? You have just put on the ochre robe. You have Rudraksha beads on your arm." The Mother asked her about her spiritual teacher. In reply the woman said that she had not been initiated. "Without initiation," said the Mother, "without any spiritual realisation, you have put on this sacred robe.

This is not proper for you. The robe you have put on is very holy. I was about to salute you with folded hands. All will bow down at your feet. You must earn power to assimilate it." The woman said, "I have a desire to be initiated by you."

Mother : How will it be possible !

But the woman insisted. Golap-Ma supported her. The Mother seemed to yield a little. She said, "We shall think about it."

Gauri-Ma came with the girls of her Asrama. They all worshipped the Mother, took Prasadam and went away.

After finishing the worship in the Shrine-room, Bilas Maharaj came there and whispered to the Holy Mother, "I do not know, Mother, if Sri Ramakrishna has accepted the food-offering to-day. An impure leaf, carried by the wind, dropped on the food. Why was it so? Many devotees brought offerings from home. I do not know what has happened." The Mother asked if he had sprinkled the water of the Ganges over the food. He answered in the affirmative and went away. I felt troubled in mind to hear of this.

The worship of the Holy Mother went on in the same way. No sooner were some of the heaps of flowers and Bael leaves removed than a fresh pile was formed near her feet.

It was the time of the noon-day worship when a party of three women and men, from a distant part of the country, came to pay their respects to the Holy Mother. They were very poor, all their possessions consisting of one piece of cloth each. They begged their passage to Calcutta. One of the party—a man devotee—was having a private talk with the Mother.

There seemed to be no end to the conversation. The time for the noon-day worship was passing by, and the Mother must perform it. The inmates of the Udbodhan house became annoyed. One of them said to the devotee, in unmistakable language, "If you have any more to say, you had better come down-stairs and talk to the senior monks." But the Mother declared with some firmness, "It does not matter if it grows late. I must hear what they have to say." She continued to listen to him with great patience. In a whisper, she gave him some instructions. Then she sent for his wife as well. We inferred that they must have experienced something in a dream. Later on we came to learn that they had received some sacred Mantram in their dream. After about an hour they took leave of the Mother. The Mother said, "Alas, they are very poor! They have come here with great hardship."

After the noon-day worship, we had our meal. The Holy Mother now wanted to enjoy a little rest, and we retired into the adjoining room.

It was four o'clock in the afternoon. After the worship in the Shrine, Rash Behary Maharaj said, "A European lady has come to pay her respects to you; she has been waiting for a long time." The Mother asked him to bring the lady to her. As she bowed down before the Mother, the latter clasped her hand as one does in shaking hands. The words of the Mother, that one should behave according to the time and conditions, were verified in this instance. Then she kissed the lady. The latter knew Bengali, and said, "I hope I have not inconvenienced you by

this visit. I have been waiting to see you for a long time downstairs. I am in great difficulty. My only daughter—a very good girl—is dangerously ill; so I have come here to crave your favor and blessings. Please be gracious to her so that she may be cured. She is such a nice girl. I praise her because one seldom finds, now-a-days, a good woman among us. I can vouch that many of them are wicked and evil-minded; but my daughter is of quite a different nature. Please be kind to her."

Mother : I shall pray for your daughter. She will be cured.

The European lady was much encouraged by this assurance from the Holy Mother and said, "When you say that she will be cured then she must be cured. There is no doubt about it." She spoke these words with great faith and emphasis. The Mother, with a kindly look, said to Golap-Ma, "Please give her a flower from the altar. Bring a lotus." Golap-Ma brought a lotus with a sacred Bael-leaf. The Mother took the lotus in her hand and closed her eyes for a few moments. Then she looked wistfully at the image of Sri Ramakrishna and gave the flower to the lady with these words, "Please touch your daughter's head with it." She accepted the flower with folded hands and bowed down before the Mother. "What shall I do with the flower after that?" she asked.

Golap-Ma : When it is dried, throw it into the Ganges.

Lady : No, no ! This belongs to God. I cannot throw it away. I shall make a bag out of a new piece of cloth and preserve the flower in it. I shall touch my daughter's head and body every day with it.

Mother : Very well, do that.

Lady : God is reality. He exists. I want to tell you something. A few days ago, one of my babies was bed-ridden with fever. With great fervour I prayed to God, "O Lord ! I feel that you exist, but I want an actual demonstration." I wept and laid my handkerchief on the table. After a long time I was surprised to find three sticks in its folds. I gently touched the body of the child thrice with the three sticks. That very moment he was cured of the fever."

As she narrated the incident, tear-drops trickled down her cheeks. She said, "I have wasted much of your valuable time. Please forgive me." "No, indeed," said the Mother, "I am greatly pleased to talk to you. Come here again on Tuesday."

The lady bowed down and took leave of her.

Jogin-Ma had an abscess on her back. It was operated on. The Mother said, "What a pity ! On such an auspicious day Jogin-Ma is lying in bed. She had a great desire to do many things to-day ; but she could not come to this room even once." "Are you going to Jogin-Ma ?" she asked me. "Please tell her that I shall see her presently." From Jogin-Ma's room I returned to the Holy Mother and saw Prijanath prostrating before her. The Mother kissed him on the chin. His eye was badly hurt by an umbrella-stick. A bandage was put on it. The Mother was greatly concerned about him. She said again and again, "Fortunately the eye has not been blinded." It was time for me to leave. The Mother asked me to come again.

WHEN THE EGO DIES, ALL TROUBLES CEASE

By Swami Prabhavananda

[Swami Prabhavananda is the head of the Vedanta Society, Hollywood, America. The reader will find much illumination in the Swami's clear and simple exposition of the philosophy of Atman from a practical point of view.]

ONE of his disciples once asked Sri Ramakrishna, "Sir, why

we not see God ?" Sri Ramakrishna replied, "The ego is the maya, the veil that covers God. The ego is like a heavy cloud that hides the Eternal Sun. If, by His grace, the cloud of ego is dispersed, God becomes revealed. When the ego dies, all troubles cease, and man transcends fear, for he realises the Sun of Knowledge."

What is ego ? Man is the spirit and he has a body, a mind, and

intelligence, and ego. What in Western psychology is included in the one word MIND is, in Hindu psychology, divided into the mind, which receives the impressions from the senses, the intelligence, which distinguishes between these impressions, and the ego, which experiences the consciousness of them. Furthermore, in Western psychology, mind or ego is synonymous with soul, whereas in Hindu psychology, soul is a separate existence (substance) apart

from the mind or ego. One may ask, why should we accept the soul as apart from the mind ? The proof of the existence of a soul separate and apart from the mind is given in the Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali. That great Hindu psychologist pointed out that, "the states of the mind are known because the lord of the mind, the Purusha (the soul), remains "unchangeable." Comte, the Western Positivist, pondered over how it is possible that we read our own thoughts. The reason we are able to do so has never been explained in Western psychology. Patanjali's aphorism explains why this introspection is possible. Swami Vivekananda, commenting on this aphorism, states : "Both mind and body are in a continuous state of flux. The mind and the body are like two layers of the same substance, moving at different rates of speed. Relatively, one being slower and the other quicker, we can distinguish between the two motions. For instance, a train is in motion, and a carriage is moving alongside it. It is possible to ascertain the motion of both of these to a certain extent. But still, something else is necessary. Motion can only be perceived when there is something else which is not moving. But when two or three things are relatively moving, we first perceive the motion of the fastest one, and then that of the slower ones. How does the mind perceive ? It is also in a flux. Therefore, another something is necessary which moves more slowly, and then you must get to something in which the motion is slower still, and so on, and you will never find an end. But logic compels you to stop somewhere. You must

complete the series by knowing something which never changes. Behind this never-ending chain of motion is the *Purusha*, (the soul), the changeless, the colourless, the pure. All impressions are merely reflected upon it, as a magic lantern throws images upon a screen without in any way tarnishing it."

So, this soul alone is the unchangeable reality, ever free, divine and pure. The soul is the Self in man. And the quest of philosophy is for knowledge of this Self. We read in the Upanishads, "Give up all vain talking, and know thy Self." This knowledge, however, must not be an inferential knowledge, merely. We must have direct knowledge, that knowledge which is the same as "being and becoming" : the knowledge of oneness of God. "I and my Father are one"—this is direct Self-knowledge. For, the Self which is the being in man, the one unchangeable reality, is one with God.

The Self is consciousness itself. He is the Sun of Knowledge. The Katha Upanishad says, "He shining, every other object shines in the universe." A single ray of His light illuminates the world. By that light we are conscious of ourselves and of one another. The knowledge or consciousness we express through the instruments of mind, senses, and body is a reflection of the Conscious Self. The mind and senses are not conscious by themselves ; they are the instruments through which consciousness manifests itself and through which we acquire knowledge of the objective world. He is the consciousness of all conscious existence. Sri Ramakrishna used to say, "If He turns that light of consciousness toward Himself, He becomes revealed. At night the watchman goes from

place to place, holding the flashlight before him. By its light he sees the people's faces, and by its light the people see one another, but they cannot see the watchman's face. If they wish to see him, they must ask him to turn the light on himself. So, he who desires to see the Lord, the Self within, must pray to Him, "O Lord, in Thy mercy do Thou turn the light of Thy wisdom toward Thine own Face, that I may behold Thee." The saint Ramprasad says, "Light the lamp of wisdom in the shrine of thy heart, and behold the Face of Divine Mother."

In this connection one may ask, "Why and for what use need we attain Self-knowledge, or consciousness of God?" The answer is, "Therein lies our freedom, our salvation." Kapila, the father of Sankhya philosophy defines this salvation as "the complete cessation of miseries." Is not that what every man is seeking, each in his own way? But, ignorantly, we are seeking to end miseries and establish happiness in the objective world, in the external conditions of life. And we are always disappointed. The finite world can never give us the eternal happiness we are all seeking. This world is a world of relativity and as such can give us only short-lived experiences of happiness, of misery, of life, and death. To quote from the experiences of the sages of the Upanishads, "There is no joy in the finite. Infinite alone is happiness." How are we to look upon our varied experiences in the world of relativity and to seek abiding joy in the Self is taught by Sri Krishna in the Gita. He says, "Having made the same, pain and pleasure, gain and loss, conquest and defeat, engage thou in battle

of life. The wise, possessed of this evenness of mind, go to that state which is beyond all evil. When thy intellect has become immovable, and firmly established in the Self, then thou shalt attain Self-realisation. When the mind, absolutely restrained through the practice of concentration attains quietude, and when, the Self being seen by the self, one is satisfied in his own Self; when one feels that infinite bliss which is perceived by the purified intellect and which transcends the senses, and established therein he never departs from his real state; and having obtained which, he regards no other acquisition superior to that, and where established, he is not moved even by heavy sorrow;—let that be known as the state, called by the name of Yoga,—a state of severance from the contact of pain."

The greatest obstacle to this attainment of Self-knowledge is the ego. "When the ego dies, all troubles cease." We must transcend the ego to attain divine wisdom. And the ego vanishes in what the Hindus call Samadhi, superconscious state.

The Vedas mention the seven planes or centers of consciousness. Ordinarily the mind dwells in the three lower centers, which the Yogis identify with the plexuses—(sacro-coecygeal, sacral, and solar), and man remains attached to worldliness, to lust, to greed. The fourth center of consciousness is in the region of the heart. When the mind rises to this center, spiritual awakening comes. The Yogi sees a divine light within the heart and is wonder-struck by its beauty and glory. His mind no longer runs after worldly pleasures. In the region of the throat is the fifth

center of consciousness. When the mind rises to this center, the Yogi meditates on God continuously, and gives up all vain discussions and pursuits. The sixth center of consciousness is between the eyebrows. When the mind rises to this center one becomes merged in divine consciousness, though the consciousness of a separate ego still exists. In this center, seeing the beatific vision of God, the Yogi becomes mad with joy and longs to be united with Him. But he cannot, because there is still a thin veil of ego causing separation ; just as the light in a lantern though apparently accessible, is surrounded by intervening glass. The center in the brain is the seventh. When one rises to that plane Samadhi is attained. That is the transcendental consciousness. The ego is dissolved, as it were. The highest spiritual illumination comes, and the Yogi realises the Self as one with God. This experience cannot be defined in words. For the Yogi to try to express what he realises in this state is like the "salt doll that went into the ocean to show how deep it was."

Vedanta gives two processes for the attainment of Samadhi and freeing ourselves from the ego. One is called Jnana Yoga or the Path of Knowledge, and the other is known as Bhakti Yoga or the Path of Devotion. The Path of Knowledge is the process of negation. "I am not the body, I am not the mind, I am neither the elements nor the categories. I am beyond happiness and misery ; I have no disease, or grief, or death. I am 'not this,' 'not that'." One has to negate every content of consciousness and realise Consciousness Itself. One has to know in his own soul, "Brahman alone

is the reality, all else is unreal. I am Brahman."

This is a difficult path to follow, for one may misapply and misunderstand the whole principle of religion and truth. In India as well as in the West we find much misunderstanding of the Vedantic principle of the divinity of man. There are those in India who thoroughly believe the truth, "I am Brahman" without actual realisation of it. They think that because they are Brahman, no evil or good can touch them. And as a result, instead of rising above good and evil, they remain in evil ; and instead of realising the Self beyond ego, they become egoists. In India we call such misunderstanding "indigestion of Vedanta." In the West one finds this "indigestion of Vedanta" in another form. They say, "I am divine. Hence I have every right to health, happiness, and prosperity." They want to demonstrate the principle of divinity by getting the evanescent things of life. And instead of realising the Self which is beyond all relativity, they become bound to the relative experiences of life. Instead of rising above ego, they become egoists by their repeated self-assertions. Instead of finding the spirit, they become *matter-bound*.

Indeed, it is difficult to get rid of the ego. It asserts itself, in one form or another. It is like the peepul tree, which, though you cut it down to its very roots, shoots out a new growth the next day. As long as one has physical consciousness, the ego does not die. That is why Bhakti Yoga or the Path of Devotion is considered an easier and more natural process for realising God. As long as the ego will persist, let it do so as "I, the servant" as "I, the devotee."

Sri Ramakrishna used to say, "I like to ply the boat of my mind between the fifth and sixth centers of consciousness. I do not desire to remain in the seventh center long, for I have the longing to taste the sweetness of God, to chant His name, and sing His praise."

If this attitude of "Thou art the Lord, I am Thy child" is genuine and perfect, then the ego of a devotee is not harmful, nor

an obstacle. It is like a sword which, after touching the philosopher's stone, is turned to gold. The sword retains its form, but it can no longer injure anyone. The dry leaves of the cocoanut tree are blown off by the wind, and leave marks on tree trunk. So, only the form, the mark of the ego is left in one who has true devotion for God. Through intense devotion one attains Samadhi and realises God.

RELIGION IN THE CHANGING WORLD

By P. Nagaraja Rao, B.A. (Hons.)

[Mr. P. Nagaraja Rao is a Research Scholar in the Philosophy Department of the Madras University. His brief presentation of the theories of religion and spiritual life held by some of the eminent thinkers of the world will come as a new source of information to those who confine their study of religion to ancient texts and their orthodox commentaries.]

Mrs. ISS Underhill in her 'Golden Sequence' mentions a story of Osbert Sitwell which is both instructive and relevant here. A traveller in the Equatorial forest looked out of the window of his lodgings one day to find out whence certain strange sounds he had heard proceeded. He beheld a huge anthropoid ape in chains, one of those tragic creatures just verging on the human—bowing in solemn adoration before the splendour of the rising moon. The traveller gazed at the spectacle struck with awe. "I had seen," he said, "the birth of religion—innocent nature emerging from its sleep and already finding in that first vague moment of consciousness something beyond itself whien it must adore." But is this a disclosure of God, or a revelation of the vital roots of religious consciousness? Is this religion? If this be the beginning

of religion, what is the end? What is religion to-day? What is the content of religion? And what the nature of religious experience? The question bristles with difficulties.

But it is a fundamental question. It goes to the very roots of human life. What is happening to religion in this changing world? Will posterity know 'religion'—not any particular religion—but 'religion' as we understand it? Will religion survive? Or, contrariwise, is religion any longer under the attack of science? What is the status of religion to-day?

Now first of all—what is religion? People are apt to assume straightway that religion is an answer or seeks principally to answer the question of Faust—"What at bottom holds this world together?" It deals with this question doubtless, but it goes further. It prescribes a scheme of life

by determining our attitude to the very cause of existence, the true end of action perceived in the light of the answer to the Faustian question. There are in the first place, many answers. It is an instructive phenomenon. The very multiplicity of the answers, the bewildering divergence of each answer from another, the vehemence with which each answer is asserted to be exclusively and finally correct answer are all important aspects of the phenomenon itself.

Let us analyse the answers—The outstanding answer to the question is theism. Theism covers almost three-fourths of the available definitions of religion. There are a number of sharply marked stages in the development of theism. In its pure form we have its best exemplars in Vaishnavism and Christianity. Religion to the theist begins in man as "a vital, distinct, autonomous and universal demand for something perfect." This results in an attitude called the religious attitude. The religious attitude is a definite concrete attitude towards the determiner of our destiny, contrasted with such other attitudes like the ethical, the aesthetic and the logical. The theists name such a determiner of our destiny God (the omnipotent, the good, the Creator). The central principle through all theistic thought is 'to know the way of the Lord's life (the divine life) and try to live the life of the Spirit'. This can best be done not 'by co-operating with God as a fellow worker' but by absolute self-surrender. This is the famous doctrine of Prapatti (self-surrender) of which Ramanuja spoke. These theists believe 'that not a sparrow falls to the ground without the Lord's

will.' An unfailing faith, or a will to believe (to use the phrase of James) is necessary for religious life. James defines the negative origin of religious attitude thus : "So long as the egoistic worry of the sick soul guards the door, the expansive confidence of the soul of faith never gains entrance." The phrase "Life of the Spirit" might be elusive, but it is the vitamin that sustains the religious life. The fundamental message of the gospel is the feeling of awe or idea of the holy of Professor Otto before a great over-powering being, God. Dr. Otto tells us that this 'idea of the holy' is the quintessence of religious life. It is a distinct non-rational category. This feeling of the 'numinous' is an *a priori* value category of religion. The feeling of the uncanny, the feeling of dependence, the thrill of awe, and the feeling of self-abasement attend the sense of the holy. Rapture and exultation and mystic union are the several attempted definitions of this mental state. Dr. Otto lays great stress on the point, that there must be a personal God, 'a not ourselves' to use Arnold's phrase.

A good many modern Christians, in the words of Evelyn Underhill, have reduced the message of the Gospel to a few humanitarian virtues such as love for mankind, fellowship, service and suffering which ameliorate the "'light afflictions' which mark the temporal lot of man-kind." These are mistaken to be the substance of Christianity whereas they are only the symptoms of Christianity. It is wrong to replace the 'eternal glory' of an awe-struck sense of a Transcendent God by a shallow immanentalism and an emphasis on the here and now. If we are to reduce the Christ-

ian adoration of God to altruism and the Christian charity to humanitarian sentiment, "we shall have pious naturaliam abounding in good works." But such a life would lack the creative energy which comes from the faith in the eternal source of power, God. The acknowledgment of a transcendent, perfect, good God is the corner-stone of all theism.

We have examined the nature of the theist's God, and the feeling of the theist towards the determiner of his destiny. The theist best expresses his attitude in prayer. An examination into the forms of prayer gives us an idea of the various shades of theism in their development. The ordinary man of the world asks for the good things of life—for cattle and wealth, and abundance of food and numerous off-spring as in the early Vedic days. There is "the prayer of the priest which consists of magical spells and mystical formulae," not a simple direct request. He asks God, "I have made the offerings and I must get those in return." There is on the other hand the prayer of the righteous man who asks for the things of the spirit and not merely for the good things of the world. As contrasted with the prayer of the righteous man, we have the prayer of the orthodox. Both ask for the things of the spirit; "one is easy and natural," the other is "rigid and mechanical;" one overrides tradition and the other is overidden by tradition; "one sets God above scriptures, the other the scriptures above God." We have the prayer of the Prophet and the saint as contrasted with the prayer of the metaphysician and the philosopher. Both are intent on the higher things of the spirit. Both have a lofty vision of God and pray

unto him. The prayer of the one is warm and concrete and that of the other is abstract and cold. To the former God is a person whom he realises in his heart; to the latter God is a principle whom he approaches "through the logical staircase and leaves the natural slope of intuition adopted by the prophets."

There are some rationalists who also profess a religion but not a religion with a God but only with a Good. They tell us that "biologically considered man is nothing more than the latest of a series of living creatures and that he did not arrive on this planet faultless and finished but is slowly ground into shape by the shocks of circumstances." They tell us that the supernatural in religion should be given up. They say God is the name we tremblingly give to the unseen and inexplicable. "He is the sanctuary of ignorance." They tell us that religion is the biological device to keep man living on for ever. The golden age for the religious man is not the fabled past but the future vision. They say "that religion is only a rearrangement of our prejudices." The tendency of religion is to mistake desires for facts, to take the world to be what we should like it to be than to see it as it is. The Sociologist tells us that religion sprang from the need for living in society. The mechanistic psychology of to-day tells us that religion is at best the day-dream of a being with an ape-like pedigree. Dr. Freud has told us in startling terms in his admirable and ingenious book *The Future of an Illusion*: "An examination of the unconscious shows to us that the dynamic drive of ethical strife and religious aspirations is a pack of mere illusions." "God is the

function of the unconscious." "Religion is quite in conformity with pan-sexualism." Religion is only an incident in the psychological development of man and society which has to be cast off. The higher religious experiences are "idealised sex emotions." The mystic experiences are only the 'projections of the morbid craving of the psychologically perverted.' Some humanitarians have spoken of religion as the influence of the social group to conserve the social value. To them religion is social utility. They laugh and tell us that every religion has its Popes, Crusades and heresy hunting. Some have made religion a play-thing of statecraft. "Religion," in the words of Radhakrishnan, "when it is used in this fashion, becomes a capitalist propaganda." There is now the strike of the wage-earner who wants a new social order. The extreme rationalists have told us that most of us are afraid to think that what we want is not so much the 'will to believe' of James, as the wish to know. They tell us that all the troubles of the world are due to ignorance, half-knowledge and stupidity. They tell us that all the grave dangers of mankind are due to our uncritical faith in a God and a religion. Poverty, disease and destitution, superstition and all the standing and cynical mockeries of religious formalism and dogmatism are not to be attributed to the malicious machinations of a Satan. His Satanic Majesty rules by no right divine, but by right human. What is wanted is sanity and criticism which can unsettle our petrified opinion, shatter dogmas and dissipate our fantastic illusions and our credulous misconceptions of the story of a God and a past and the grotesque miscalculation

of a future life. To such a rationalist, what is required is to be good in the ordinary logical sense of the term. One great rationalist of our day, Prof. Joad, finds God to be a practical joker as represented by Faust. God seems to have created the world for his amusement and occupies his whole time in deriving His entertainment from the spectacle of its anonomics. God's chief diversion seems to be the behaviour of man who is the butt of the universe. When his Maker afflicts him, he praises Him; when He visits him with misfortune, he persuades himself that he is doing all this for his own good. "What a conceited ass," thinks the Almighty, "whatever I do he thinks that it is all for his best." Such is the practical joker, God. The rationalist insists on sanity and a life of intelligence and social beneficence. The religion we need, according to Russell, is the wish to know, and not the will to believe.

To me religion is in essence an attempt of man to express his notion of a perfect entity or order. It is a flight after ideality. The ordinary theist paints God in his own image. It was Eenophon who said, "If oxen and lions had imagination, they would make God in their own image." Our conception of religion depends upon our metaphysics. To me the world of reality is one absolute consciousness, not a personal God. "A personal God might satisfy the emotional needs of man, but it cannot be the highest concept." What we all of us have is only an experience partial. To become one with the Absolute is the experience of the highest type. It is being and not knowing. "Art and reflection can be recommended by some as substitutes for this expe-

rience," but we behold a Law in nature and there must also be a Law in life. Russell's philosophy does not prove the failure of man so much as the inadequacy of the intellect as against the truths proved on our pulse. Religious experience is not mere hallucination or day-dream. It is the intuitional realisation of the Absolute. Prof. Royce tells us that the mystics are the most radical empiricists, for to them the facts of religion are as much a fact as a green leaf or the sun is for a dispassionate observer. No stable conviction can be built on mere dialectics. The methods of religion might be optional, but the conclusions are obligatory. Religion can be identified with emotion, with feelings and rituals, but all these views are right in what they affirm, but wrong in what they deny. Religion is an immediate experience, it is living the life of Brahman. It is not a form of thought, as Hegel puts it, but it is "what an individual does with his solitariness." The Upanishadic 'Tat twam asi' is an

illustration of the above-mentioned experience. The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord. This feeling of unity is present in every type of mysticism, be it either neo-Platonism, Christian mysticism, or Sufism, or Walt Whitmanism, or the Echartian type of mysticism. This experience is reached not so much by placating God, as by transforming our being. The mystic emphasis is more on being than on doing. "The soul sees, the mind consults, and the heart approves." This is the highest religious experience of which the Upanishad speaks, and which the greatest of Indian souls have experienced. We shall conclude this paper with the saying of a great western mystic which gives us a glimpse of what religion at its best is. "Blessed indeed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, but more blessed are those who hunger after the presence of God, and most blessed are those who having attained the eternal now hunger and thirst after nothing at all."

SRI RAMAKRISHNA BIRTH CENTENARY

By Swami Suddhananda

[The Birth Centenary of Sri Ramakrishna falls in February next, and will be celebrated in different places in the course of next year. In this article Swami Suddhananda, formerly Secretary of the Ramakrishna Mission, expounds the message of Sri Ramakrishna to the modern world, and appeals to the public for help in the Centenary celebration.]

BORN in the year 1836 at Kamarpukur, an obscure village in the district of Hugli, Bengal, Ramakrishna Paramahansa lived his comparatively short life of fifty years mostly in the Dakshineswar Kali Temple on the Ganges about 5 miles from Calcutta, the premier city of

India. His life was not full of innumerable outward activities, but in the inner world of his mind it was full of intense activity, which moulded his character in such a way that to the fortunate few of his contemporaries who came in contact with him, it was a great object-lesson for mould-

ing their own lives. Sri Ramakrishna, by his various spiritual disciplines—his actual practice, to the letter, of the different forms of Sadhana as inculcated in Hinduism with its diverse forms such as Vaishnavism, Shaktaism and Vedantism, as well as of the Mahomedan and Christian methods of Sadhana—realised the one absolute truth, the undivided Truth-Knowledge-Bliss, which is termed Vishnu, Shakti, Brahma, Allah or God by different religions. He at last came to the conclusion that though different religions are apparently contradictory, yet they are all true, and every sincere devotee, to whatever religion he may belong, comes ultimately to the same goal.

It is gratifying to learn that his birth Centenary is soon going to be celebrated throughout the world in an adequate manner. I shall try to point out in this short article how this celebration of his Centenary, in which the study of his life and teachings will of course form the principal feature, will help India as well as the whole world to come to a state of mutual understanding and harmony.

Do we not see that the main obstacle to our mutual understanding is the belief in everybody's mind that his religion alone is true and all others are false? The most liberal among us may conceive that others' religions may contain some truths, but we think that our religion is the highest. In Hinduism the Vaishnavas contend that Vishnu or Krishna alone can give salvation, whereas the Shaktas claim the same thing about their favourite Deity—Shakti or Kali. The Vedantist on the other hand says that unless you realise the one absolute formless Brahman as true and all

else false, there is no salvation. For want of space I refrain from mentioning the innumerable sects and subdivisions of these various cults warring with one another, and refer the reader to his own practical experience. The Mahomedan will tell you that Allah alone is true and Mahomed is His only prophet. The Christian on the other hand believes that Jesus Christ is the only begotten son of God, and that none can enter the Kingdom of Heaven but through Him. I may mention here another class of persons who are to be found among all religions—Hindu, Mahomedan or Christian, and are gradually growing in number; they are educated in the so-called modern style and have studied modern science. They call themselves Atheists or Agnostics and say that they cannot sincerely believe in any of the existing religions as these are mutually contradictory and full of superstitions. The days of Crusades and killing or burning a person for his religious profession is almost gone from the world, perhaps never to return. Bloodshed and cruelty in the name of religion, even if they exist now, are not a very common feature of public life. But persecution with the pen and abusing each other's religion, are, I am sorry to say, still rampant. In some places, perhaps, a little toleration is preached and practised. Still looking at another's religion with equal reverence as at one's own is a very rare phenomenon indeed. Communalism is still the great bane of every society, and I think, the coming Centenary of Sri Ramakrishna, the prophet of harmony, will help to a great extent to promote the noble object of uniting the different religions of the world in

a grand ideal of universal religion. How is this to be brought about ? By closely studying the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna. His life teaches us that we are not to discard the particular doctrines and forms and rituals of our own creed. A Hindu is not to cease to be a Hindu, Mahomedan cease to be a Mahomedan or a Christian cease to be a Christian. Let every religionist stick to his own faith and practise it as zealously as ever, rather let him be more zealous in his particular religious practices, but let him also study the religious doctrines and practices of the other religions with reverence. Let all religionists gather under a common banner of universal religion without giving up their particular distinguishing traits, and make a crusade against immorality and irreligion which can be summed up in one word as selfishness.

With regard to the agnostic educated class to which I have referred, I shall tell the reader how Sri Ramakrishna who was himself a staunch believer in God, dealt with a person of that class, and he will be charmed by his method of teaching.

Once a gentleman came to him and said, "Sir, I have lost my peace of mind, and though I have tried all sorts of human means to restore it, I have failed. I do not believe in the existence of God. So I cannot pray to him for help in this matter. Can you, Sir, show me any way of getting it back ?" Reader, what advice would you have given to this questioner. Perhaps you would have tried to persuade him to accept your own faith, which to such a person would have been of no avail. What was Sri Ramakrishna's advice to him ? He gently said, "Brother, can you not

pray in this way : Oh, God, if you exist extricate me from this trouble." It is said that the gentleman met him long after, expressed his gratitude for the piece of advice he had received, which, he said had exactly suited his nature, and described how praying in that fashion he was not only cured of his troubles but in the end became a staunch believer in God.

If you read Sri Ramakrishna's teachings, you will find innumerable instances of his catholic way of teaching. He was an ardent believer in the doctrine of Incarnation (Avatara) and also in the Lila of Radha-Krishna literally, like an ordinary Vaishnava. But when he met a person who could not believe in the doctrine of Incarnation, he would tell him, " You do not believe in Incarnations—what of that ? Think of the formless God in which you believe with earnestness and devotion. Only don't be dogmatic and quarrel with others who are of a different persuasion." About Radha-Krishna he would say, " You do not believe in Radha-Krishna Lila literally—what of that ? But of course you can try to imitate in your life Radha's intense love for Krishna, and have an all consuming love for your God." To the orthodox Hindus he would say with reference to Christ, " Why call him Jesu Khrishta, as if he was foreigner or alien—think of him rather as Rishi Khrista, and you will find a place for him in your own heart."

Want of space compels me to refrain from quoting more examples. Suffice it to say that a western scholar like Max Muller and a western writer and thinker like Romain Rolland have found in Ramakrishna a teacher from whose noble life and teachings they could learn lessons in catholicity.

Already many sincere souls throughout the world have come to this broad outlook by studying Sri Ramakrishna's life and teachings. His coming Centenary, by preaching his gospel of harmony throughout the world will surely help many more sincere truth seekers in learning about this noble truth of the harmony of religions. Thus the movement for peace and concord and brotherhood will increase in strength as well as intensity, and God willing, will help to usher into this world of strife and

quarrel the Kingdom of Heaven which every one in his heart of hearts is seeking to find established.

Therefore, gentle reader, do you not feel inclined to join this Centenary movement and help to your utmost ability to make it a success which, you must admit it eminently deserves ?

In this short article I have tried briefly to bring out the one prominent feature of Sri Ramakrishna's life and teachings. I hope to deal with other aspects of his teachings in future.

TWO MOODS

By Bapubhai V. Gami, B.A. (Hons.)

[The writer is the head of an educational institution in Baroda State. He is also a Sadhaka, and the following article is based upon his own intimate convictions.]

IT is everybody's experience that sometimes he is in a bright, happy and light mood, and sometimes he is feeling the weight of gloomy despondency. This alternation of Light and Darkness is the rule of the world and the principle working in our existence. Day and night, bright half and dark half, Uttarayana and Dakshinayana, Bright and Dark periods in the life of nations—all go to prove this double principle in the workings of the universe. The solitary, super-conscious heights achieved by individuals and nations are destined to the equally deep depths of the sub-conscious ocean of life surging below, until the sub-conscious is raised up and transformed to the light and nature of the super-conscious.

These heaving up and falling down of the spirit and the mood of the individuals and nations

come along the natural course or evolution of the universe. It is the way in which Nature is working to reach her goal. In the case of man where there is consciousness of this principle of the workings of the universe, the progress is rapid, and there is vibration of life, light and strength.

In the light of this nature of the universe, if one wishes to lead a progressive life, one must learn to preserve the protective balance in the event of clashes of conflicting tendencies. How can this balance be achieved? Unless a man establishes a strong foundation for the steady movement of his motion, he would easily tumble down and be a prey to the forces struggling to get the upper hand in the fight.

In the face of the opposing downward forces working in the universe it is not easy to secure a sound balance and rise up. It

requires a strong adamantine faith in the Wisdom, Truth, Love and Helping Hand of the Almighty. Even in the most trying circumstances, when even the last plank of our hope is shattered and we are drowning in this great ocean of life, that faith should never lessen in its brightness and strength. Even in the uplifted Hand of Almighty ready to strike a blow we must have the faith to see His loving care for us.

Such a faith must be mixed with the spirit of self-surrender, if we desire to get the progressive balance in life.

An individual should cease to believe in his own works. Whatever he does, even the breathings should be offered up to the Divine Will. And as an humble servant of His, he must take care to carry out His biddings in the minutest details. Either in peace or in war, in calm or in clash, in lull or in storm, he must think that he is doing His work and it is His Will and Wisdom that is guiding him.

There should not lurk in the recesses of our being even the most

trifling thought and will which think and work for ourselves alone. Offer up every thing which you call your own to Him. Then it is His look-out whether to make or mar you. You are His servant. Your duty is to think, feel and work for Him alone. Then you are able to establish such a balance in life that no circumstance will trouble you, and the periods of Darkness in life will lessen day by day and the periods of Light will gain in strength and duration. And at last the lost Sun who is now pent up in caves of Panis will shatter the limits and rise high up in the sky. There will be constant Light of Usha, and the Darkness of Night will disappear and the Dark Mother will take up the form of the Bright One.

Let us then pray to this Bright Usha, to visit our dark habitations. Let us pray to this luminous Agni, the Divine Will-Power, to give us Light and Strength and show us the way through the sacrifice, to the Heavens, the Swar, the abode of the Sun of Truth—God.

VIEWS OF LIFE FROM THE HINDU STANDPOINT

By G. A. Chandavarkar, M.A.

[Mr. Chandavarkar is an experienced educationist of Hyderabad. In the following article he presents, with references to the original authorities, the various stand-points from which Hindu thinkers have viewed life.]

BOTH the immensity and the complexity of Life's problem demand for its solution, however partial it may be, certain definite views of that life. Unless and until we have certain accurate views of the goal, we cannot hope to march on successfully. Pilgrim's path is ever beset

with thousand pitfalls. 'To travel hopefully is always better than to arrive.' Struggles and scrambles intensify the sweetness and the glory of any achievement. Of all the problems, the problem of life—its goal, its *summum bonum*, its purpose—has been ever presenting varied

aspects and view-points. What is human life, how has it come into existence, why is it so constituted, what is its end and aim, whither it is travelling and what will be its final state are all questions which have been agitating the minds and engaging the earnest attention of all the thinkers and philosophers, the saints and Sadhus, Rishies and Yogis from times immemorial. To the extent to which each one of these has presented, or rather has endeavoured to present, solutions to these eternal problems, to that extent they have been the benefactors of humanity. The muster-roll of such has been richly ornamented from Lord Manu to Ramakrishna Bhagavan. What views of life did such benefactors hold individually and collectively? Were their views antagonistic or identical? Let us humbly seek answers to these questions of questions, as briefly as possible, trying to avoid all metaphysical intricacies or philosophical doctrines of an abstruse nature.

Bhartrihari, the poet-saint of love, piety and non-attachment significantly observes : 'न जाने संसारः किमद्युत
नः कि विद्युतः'—Is this Samsara full of joy and happiness or sorrow and misery? I do not know.' He leaves the reader in doubt with regard to the answer. His is a big mark of interrogation. But there is one word which is very significant. That word is Samsara. Let us begin the theme of our inquiry with this view of life.

(i) The life is spoken of here as Samsara. What does this word connote and denote? Its root meaning is 'That which moves' (स = with; ग् = to move). Continuous motion harmonious progress, and rhythmic movement—dynamic and not static—are therefore the essential conditions of

life. Excelsior should therefore be its motto. 'Awake, arise,' ब्रह्मा, अप्त 'Move and act is the notion conveyed by this word. In this movement or progress lies the glory of one's achievement.' Now this progress indicates struggle. Struggle again presupposes tremendous odds and temptations of life. The pilgrim should naturally avoid these and progress. It is a combination of Amrita (nectar) and Visha (poison). Only its proportion in each may vary. Knowing this be *in it* and *out of it*.

(ii) Other thinkers prefer to call life a Sagara or an ocean—Samsara Sagara—समोऽयमतीव विशिष्टः—strange is this ocean. It has its waves that rise and fall. There storms will be, tempests will occur but calm should prevail. Cross this ocean of misery before the frail barge dashes against any rock and is broken to pieces. Vast ocean is life to be sure! Mark its immensity, its vastness, its grandeur and sail on to the haven. Its harbour is the Paramapurusha. The drop is to be ultimately united with the waters of that immensity. Poet Wordsworth also thinks alike.

(iii) Life is compared by some others to a great wheel—Samsara Chakra as they call it. A wheel rotates. Browning may call it 'The great Potter's wheel.' Omar Khayyam may say 'Potter, Potter, gently tap'. But Kalidasa significantly remarks : "नीर्घोक्त्युर्व च दग्धा चक्रनेत्रिमणं" Like the wheel it goes up and down. The poor may be wealthy and the wealthy may be poor. The happy may be sorrowful and the sorrowful may be happy. सुखे दूष्यानुवंशि तथा सुखानुवंशि Happiness and misery will make the wheel rotate. If then the miserable feel disheartened, they

ought to look up and hope for better days ; if the wealthy or the happy feel vain and proud, they ought to take the warning that the wheel will turn. Pride goeth before a fall. How have the mighty fallen !

(iv) Life is sometimes spoken of as a battle-field. This suggests to us the idea that one ought to bravely wage war against worldly miseries and try to march triumphant. The world is for the brave जनयत्वा वज्रादित्यं प्राप्तः । 'Soul is not to be gained by the weak in body and mind' say the Upanishads.

(v) Life is also compared to a game. It is 'Leela' (लीला) sport. Prof. Huxley has a similar idea. It is, he says, a big game of chess. In order to win the game one ought to know the rules and play well. It may be Krishna Leela or Rama Leela. It may be the 'Dance of Nataraja' or Tandava-Nritya. Shakespeare may speak of it as a stage. We are the actors. The Great Power who is the Sutra-Dhara, the Chief Manager is behind, in and out also.

(vi) Life is again spoken of as a Kshetra or Field. The farmer could reap there as he sows. He ought to weed out the wild plants, till it with Jnana and Karma and reap अमृत or Bliss Eternal. The Gita refers to it as Kshetra and Ksherajna.

(vii) Life, says the Vedantin, is Maya—Illusion. Not that it is entirely false or a dream. Its reality is hidden from us. How ? Say the

Upanishads 'हिरण्यगंगा परेण सत्यस्यापि हितं मुक्ते' Truth is hidden from us by the glitter of gold. Let us realise we are the sparks of that Great Fire. 'A God in Germ' sings Robert Browning. 'Microcosm of the Macrocosm.' A noble ideal to be sure. Once the dross is removed or burnt out, the pure gold will shine brilliantly. In the fire of Vairagya—non-attachment—it is to be burnt out. Remove the veil of Heranya and Truth will be visible.

All these views are by themselves correct and never antagonistic. Their variety is misunderstood as antagonism. Virakti or renunciation is wrongly supposed to be inaction. It is a means for true action. The path may be one of Karma, Jnana or Bhakti. It is bound to lead on to that one goal. The struggle of the finite to be one with the Infinite is indeed glorious. The progress of civilisation or culture is typified in that struggle which may be described as the war between Gods and Demon. Krishna is the Charioteer. That is the Dharma-Yuddha—a war not to end all wars or to make the place safe for democracy—but a war of righteousness, justice, equity, patience and perseverance. Vairagya is the armour. Victory is triumph over death. Many such Mrityun Jayas or victors of death—have lived and gone. The attainment of that state must form the most important quest of all human beings.

THE HINDU CONCEPTION OF THE DEITY 311

By T. M. P. Mahadev, M.A.

(The following is a review of a recent publication—The Hindu Conception of the Deity by Bharatan Kumarappa, M.A., Ph.D., published by Luzac and Co., 46, Great Russel Street, London; price 12sh. 6d., pages 356. The review gives a brief but penetrating analysis of the position adopted by Theism and Absolutism with regard to Ultimate Reality.)

D R. Bharatan Kumarappa in his book *The Hindu Conception of the Deity*, traces the development of the conception of the Deity in Indian Thought beginning from the age of the Upanishads and culminating in the philosophy of Ramanuja. That the abstract Monism of Sankara is the earlier and the concrete Monism of Ramanuja a more developed and perfect form of philosophy is the view maintained by him. Reality is at first conceived as a bare, contentless unity, and then, details, come to be filled in, with the result that Reality is found to be a concrete universal. The learned Doctor observes that the Upanisadic conception of the nature of the Deity "passed from an earlier stage of speculation and investigation where the view that was reached was that Brahman was primarily an ultimate, all-pervading conscious principle, to a later stage, where Brahman, besides being conceived thus, came also to be regarded as possessing many transcendental qualities as well as several perfections." While Sankara took the earlier of these views to be the 'End of the Veda,' Ramanuja discerned the flaw in such a doctrine, rejected it as unsatisfactory and brought to a perfection the other stream of Upanisadic wisdom which regards the Deity as the supreme, all-perfect Person whose modes are the intelligent beings and the inert things of this world. Ramanuja directs his invectives against "the unfortunate Advaitin," refutes his doctrine of non-difference, shows the concept of maya to be a self-contradiction, saves the individual from the pitiable plight into which he is thrown

by the system of Advaita, and arrives at the most lofty conception of the Deity which he defines, neither as a pure non-difference substance nor characterless thought, but as the highest Self, "characterised essentially by thought and bliss as well as by the six attributes of wisdom (*jnana*), strength (*bala*), lordship (*aisvarya*), might (*virya*), energy (*sakti*) and glory (*tejas*), of great beauty, absolutely unrivalled, free from all evil, filled with an infinite number of excellent qualities, and abounding in love."

In interpreting the Upanisads Dr. Kumarappa follows the method of the modern critical scholar and not of the traditionalist. But the conclusion at which he arrives through this method is that "the predominant thought of the Upanisads seems to be that Brahman pervades the world as its Soul." It would appear that, according to him, the dominant view of the Upanisads is Visistadvaitic. But that such a conclusion is not warranted by a critical study of the Upanisads will be evident when we consider the opinion of George Thibaut who, of all persons, cannot be charged with partiality for Sankara. "The task of reducing the teaching of the Upanisads to a system consistent and free from contradictions is an intrinsically impossible one," he writes. "But the task once being given, we are quite ready to admit that Sankara's system is most probably the best which can be devised." This Dr. Kumarappa himself seems to recognise when he says that Ramanuja received his main inspiration from the devotional religion to which he belonged, though the view

which he advocated is not altogether lacking in the Upanisads.

With copious quotations principally from the *Sri Bhasya*, the Doctor criticises the system of Advaita, its view of the Absolute as attributeless, its theory of world-illusion, its doctrine of non-difference, its conception of release, etc. It is not our aim, here, to attempt an answer to the charges levelled against the system of non-dualism. Almost all the objections have been replied to by later Advaitins. One would wish, however, the author of the book under review had considered at least some of the replies and tried to refute them. Neither is there space, nor is it necessary for us to repeat the arguments advanced by the Advaitin in defence of his view. But we cannot refrain from pointing out certain flaws in the Visistadvaitin's understanding of Advaita and certain difficulties which beset Theism in general and its formulation by Ramanuja in particular.

In defining Brahman as reality, intelligence, bliss, the Advaitin never means that intelligence and bliss are states of the mind. "That consciousness is the activity of a self which is other than its conscious state is seen from the fact that consciousness consists of momentary mental states which require a permanent self as their substrate and relating principle," observes Dr. Kumarappa. Here, there is a confusion between consciousness (or intelligence) which constitutes the essential nature of the self and the psychosis of the internal organ which, as a modification of maya, falls within the category of not-self. Chaitanya is not chitta. Intelligence is not intellect. The scriptural text "The mind consists of food" is quoted by the Doctor as an evidence for the view that consciousness was regarded by the philosopher who was responsible for the passage as the result of non-conscious processes, and as therefore not ultimate. But the Upanisadic soot never intends 'mind' to mean consciousness or the self. It is a precious contribution of the Hindus to

the science of psychology to have proclaimed even so early as at the age of the Upanisads that mind is a product (subtle, it may be) of matter. But the Hindu thinkers never confuse mind which is constituted by particular, perishing, psychical presentations with the imperishable, immutable Intelligence. Mind is the abode of the self, and because of its clarity there is a reflection of intelligence therein. Hence consciousness which forms the essential nature of Brahman is not an act of the mind. Similarly, by bliss the Advaitin never understands "a pleasing state of consciousness." What is called pleasing states of consciousness are only reflections of the prototype Bliss in the pure psychoses of the intellect. Hence, all objections to the view, that intelligence and bliss constitute the essential nature of Brahman, are baseless.

"When some texts declare that Brahman is free from qualities, the Advaitin makes a mistake of interpreting them in isolation, without considering other texts which describe Brahman as having several qualities," says Dr. Kumarappa. But the Advaitin never makes the mistake of isolating texts. He is interested in the harmonious interpretation of Scripture as much as any one else. But when a person is confronted with two contradictory statements, there is no other go for him but to abandon the one and accept the other. Scripture would have no purport in predicating of the Absolute attributes which are established in empirical usage. Therefore through the device of certain interpretative principles, the Advaitin holds that restating the attributes which are to be found in empirical usage, Scripture denies them in respect of Brahman. It passes off comprehension how such a passage like "He is the witness, intelligence, pure and attributeless (sakshi veta kevalo nirgunas eva)" negatives only "the evil qualities depending on Prakrti."

That from the existence of non-sentient matter in the world, we may

infer the existence of an intelligent principle which animates and supports, just as from the existence of a living body, we infer the existence of a soul or intelligent principle which animates it, is one of the arguments for the existence of God which Ramanuja refutes. Some of the defects in the analogy as pointed out by him are: (a) "the soul does not bring into existence the body which it animates," (b) "the soul does not entirely of itself support the body," (c) "the fact that the various parts of a body cohere together may be due to other forces than to the fact that it is animated by a soul," (d) "the existence of animated bodies, moreover, has for its characteristic mark the process of breathing which is absent in the case of the earth, sea, mountains, etc." Now, there are certainly these defects involved in the analogy of soul and body. But does not Ramanuja himself employ this analogy for explaining the relation of the world to Brahman? "Ramanuja's teaching... in regard to the relation of Brahman to the world, is this," says Dr. Kunnarappa, "The world, consisting of matter and souls, is the body of Brahman. He is distinct from it and forms its Soul."

Ramanuja's conception of the Deity is that of a Theist. God is the supreme Person possessed of infinite perfections. "He has for His essential attributes thought, bliss and freedom from evil. He is characterised by every perfection, and above all by love." But Theism must face the dilemma which Mr. Bradley formulates in his *Appearance and Reality*. "If you identify the Absolute with God, that is not the God of religion. If again you separate them, God

becomes a finite factor in the whole... Short of the Absolute, God cannot rest, and having reached that goal, he is lost and religion with Him.... We may say that God is not God, till He has become... in all, and that God, which is all in all, is not the God of religion." There are two ways of escaping from this dilemma. We can say either that God is finite or maintain that he is the Absolute seen under the limitation of the mind. Theists like James Ward and William James regard God as a *proximus inter pares* and not an *ens entium*. The Deity is the foremost among the finites, a purusa-visesa, the creator of creators. William James pictures God as the Big Brother fighting against odds. God and men are fellow-soldiers in the struggle to banish evil from the world. The escape which these philosophers suggest is easy but hazardous. A finite God will cease to be God. The Advaitin's conception of the Deity avoids this difficulty. God is the Absolute seen under the limitation of maya. Brahman qualified by nescience is Isvara. The Deity is essentially a human concept, and hence the concept cannot be perfect. *Sub specie temporis* the Absolute appears to be possessed of attributes, and we call that God Ramanuja strives to strike a middle ground. He would not admit that God is finite; nor would he subscribe to the view of the Advaitin that he is the Absolute. It is here that we find the contradiction of Visistadvaita to lie. To envisage a God that is infinite, absolute and eternal and at the same time to characterise the empirically established distinctions and differences to be absolutely real is, to our mind, a contradiction.

By Swami Thyagisananda

संयुक्तमेतत्परमङ्गं च व्यक्तान्वयं भरते विश्वमीशः ।
अनीशाश्रामा बथते भोक्तृभावाज् आत्मा देहं मुच्यते सर्वपापां ॥

वर्त = perishable अवर्त = imperishable व्यक्तान्वयं = manifest and unmanifest च = and एतद् = this संयुक्तं = bound together विश्वं = universe ईशः = the Lord भरते supports अनीशः = without the Lord आत्मा = the self भोक्तृभावाज् = because of being the enjoyer बथते = is bound देहं = God आत्मा = knowing सर्वपापां = by all fetters मुच्यते = is released च = and.

The Lord supports this universe which consists of a¹ combination of the perishable and the imperishable, the manifest and the unmanifest.² As long as the self does not know the Lord, it gets attached to worldly pleasures and is bound; but when it knows God,³ all fetters fall away from it. (8)

Notes : This verse reminds us of verses 16 to 19 of the fifteenth chapter of the Gita. The Ultimate Principle is here spoken of as superior to and controlling Nature or Prakriti and Purusha or the soul, which together constitute this universe in its subtle as well as gross aspect.

1. *Combination* :—If we take any object it will be found to have a gross or manifest aspect as well as subtle or unmanifest aspect. And these two are joined together by the relation of cause and effect. So also every object in this universe will be found to be the result of a combination of spirit and matter. Cf. Gita Chapter xiii, 26.

2. The last two lines point out attachment to worldly objects as the cause of bondage, and realisation of God as the only remedy for it.

3. *Fetters fall away &c.* :—This shows that the aspirant after realisation should direct his attention more towards the positive effort of knowing God than to the negative one of removing the bondage. All positive effort should be directed towards the realisation of God. The moment God is realised the fetters vanish of their own accord without any separate effort.

आत्मौ द्वावजातीशनीशाक्ता शेषका भोक्तृभोग्यार्थ्युता ।

अनन्तश्रामा विश्वल्पोद्यकर्ता संयं यदा विन्दते वद्यंमत् ॥

आत्मौ — the conscious subject and the unconscious object ईशनीशौ :— the master and the dependent हौ — both अनीशौ — are unborn भोक्तृभोग्यार्थ्युता — who is engaged in bringing about the relation of the enjoyer and the enjoyed एका — another one हि — too अजा — is unborn एतद् — this संयं — triad यदा — when श्राम — Brahman विन्दते — realises आत्मा — the self अनन्तः — infinite विश्वल्पः — having assumed the form of the universe अकर्ता — inactive भवति — becomes.

The conscious subject and the unconscious object, the master and the dependent, are both unborn. She too who is engaged in bringing about the relation of the enjoyer and the enjoyed (between these two) is unborn. When one realises all these three as Brahman, the self becomes infinite, universal and inactive. (9)

Notes : This verse deals with the शृङ्खि or the three elements of thought,—the subject, the object and the relation between the two. These three are said to be unborn, because nobody knows when and how they came to be. The conscious subject is described as the master because it exists independent of the object in deep sleep, while the object is considered to be dependent because it cannot exist independent of the perceiving subject. The second line refers to how the subject and object are brought into relation by the inscrutable power of Maya, which invests them with the character of the enjoyer and the enjoyed and thus gives rise to all kinds of sufferings. This reminds us of Yoga sutras II-17 and 23, where junction of दृष्टि (the seer) and दृश्य (the seen) is described as the cause of avoidable misery. It is in deep Samadhi that this relation is finally severed and all the three merge themselves into one in Brahman, and the Atman which, till then, was known to be finite, active and different from the universe regains its natural infinitude, inactivity and universality.

चरं प्रधानमस्ताक्षरं हृतः क्षमात्मनाचीशते देव एकः ।
तस्याभिष्यानादोजनात्त्वभावाद् भृयथान्ते विश्वमायानिरुतिः ॥

प्रधानं = matter चरं = perishable हृतः = spirit असूताक्षरं = immortal and imperishable एकः = one देवः = God क्षमात्मनौ = the perishable and Atman ईशते = rules over सत्य च = his अभिष्यानान = by meditation योजनाः = by union तत्त्वभावात् = by becoming one with him भृयः = again अन्ते = in the end विश्वमायानिरुतिः = cessation of all illusion.

Matter is perishable, but spirit is imperishable and immortal. The one God rules over the perishable and the self. By meditating on Him, by uniting with Him and becoming one with Him, there is further cessation of all illusion in the end. (10)

Notes : The first two lines of the verse are more or less identical in thought with the first two lines of verse 8. Only it takes care to explain the word, Kshara as matter and Akshara as spirit. Some try to make out a difference by explaining the word, Hara, in this verse, as referring to the Ishwara or Personal God and Deva to the Absolute. The last two lines point out the various stages by which to reach the Absolute. The word योजनाः (by union) refers to Savikalpa or Samprajnata Samadhi and तत्त्वभावात् (by becoming one with Him) to the Nirvikalpa or Asamprajnata Samadhi.

1. *Spirit (हृतः) :*—The word, in classical Sanskrit, means the Lord Siva. But here it may refer to the personal God.

2. *Cessation of all illusion (विश्वमायानिरुतिः) :*—The reference here is to the illusion by which Brahman is mistaken as the universe.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

The Goal of Women's Movement

Mrs. Sarojini Naidu's address at the last session of the All-India Women's Conference held in Madras in the month of October was a striking pronouncement, setting forth the ideal and the goal of the Women's Movement as she conceived them to be. She contended that the goal of the movement was not the creation of a nation within a nation, the perpetuation of the idea that women had separate interests, rights and points of view from the other half of the nation. In her own inimitable way she remarked : "The whole justification for any Women's Movement in any part of the world is that it is deliberately and consciously merely a temporary phase of the work for the consolidation of the position of women, in order to enable them to take their part in the life of the world. It is only in that spirit that I ever participate in any gathering purely of women. I hear a great deal in other parts of the world of feminism, women's part, women's movement and women's point of view. I have never understood the meaning of this limitation, this segregation, this deliberate dis-inheritance of womanhood from the common inalienable rights of humanity. In India, more than in any other country, must we realise the fundamental fact that women cannot be isolated from the common life of the nation. To-day, when we meet in women's gatherings to discuss questions of educational policy or social reform or political rights, we must bear in mind that, when we use the word 'women,'

we dare not use it in the sense of a separatist definition or as something hedged round by any limitation. But women meeting as women can only do so, dare only do so, by the reaffirmation of their faith in their own destiny and their being part of the common nationhood, the common purpose, the common struggle and the common achievement."

Hence she concluded that Women's Conference would gain its true objective when it would write its own epitaph, when the leaders of the Movement would gather together and say, "We who have lived and given our life for this work are now ready to die because no longer do the women of India need the protection of a women's organisation. They are so consolidated in their strength, courage and ability that they can take their proper part in the common life of the nation, in the economic deliverance of the country, in the educational regeneration of the people, in the social re-construction of India. In all these great matters of vital import in the life of the nation, there is no sex inequality, no sex isolation, no sex disability, but there is unity of vision, action, sacrifice and service." And the only benediction she could therefore give at the Conference was "that by their own action women might hasten the day when these organisations would go to their resting place, because Indian women would have once again resumed the great and noble destiny of being half of the nation, the half that lead the vanguard of progressive measures of life."

Give up Self-confessed Inferiority

Perhaps it is only several years hence that women will feel satisfied that the consummation hoped for by Mrs. Naidu has been actually reached, but they will be hastening this date if they will embody in themselves the ideal and outlook that she wanted them to adopt. According to her women were not working towards a new ideal, but towards the remembrance of an ancient Indian ideal, and the need for reminding themselves about it was the penance they had to make for the abrogation of their own destiny. She was not one of those who believed that woman was a down-trodden creature, who ever suffered from that dreadful inferiority complex that looked outside her own strength for her regeneration or deliverance. "To say that we are smothered by man-made laws," she said, "that we are trampled by man-made conditions, that we are imprisoned by man-made injustices is to deny ourselves that element of God-head which creates its own destiny. Therefore, I think that the time has come when Indian women at all events, should make the great re-affirmation that woman is indivisibly the heart of the humanity, and that she legislates for her own destiny and that she creates ideals and policies for her country's emancipation and progress. But to sit with folded hands, to say you are not allowed to do this or that, that the professions are not open to you, that economically you are dependent, that you are slaves, that you are hide-bound by conditions and conventions—this is to acknowledge a lack of self-respect that makes you feel wrongly that you are dependent for your very elementary women's heritage

on the whims of those to whom you yourselves in years and generations of weakness and love of ease and protection have given your destiny to keep and mould or mar." There was no need for several resolutions asserting the rights of women; only one resolution carried into action was enough. "That resolution is literally in the dictionary meaning of the word—the resolution that women will wipe out from their forehead the label of their self-confessed inferiority which is unreal, that they will wipe out the idea and language of dependence, that they will not assert their right but fulfil their duty.... There is necessity only for resolution on the part of women that they shall be women of the highest stature of their womanhood."

That the reaffirmation of woman's being indivisibly the heart of humanity, that the wiping out of the label of self-confessed inferiority can help women to overcome the various difficulties that are supposed to exist in their way is amply illustrated by the example of the illustrious speaker herself. In fact it is her example that gives weight to her words.

On the main object of Christian Missions

The Church of England Diocese of Madras celebrated its Centenary last month, and organised in connection with it a public meeting under the presidency of the Governor of Madras. From the several speeches delivered on the occasion we give below two interesting extracts relating to a topic that has of late been receiving increasing attention from the Hindu public. The first which forms part of the presidential address runs thus: "It is not

merely by the number of communists that it contains that the work of a Christian organisation is to be judged. The influence that it spreads around is always far greater than the number of its individual members. Missionary work consists not merely in converting people to a particular religion, though that may well be its main object, but it also consists in providing educational facilities, medical comforts, and all forms of charitable enterprises. Looking back on the history of our Church and Diocese we may take legitimate pride that its efforts have always been directed to the cure of suffering and the alleviation of distress. Indeed there must be very few in this presidency who do not realise the great influence for good that the Church has been."

That the humanitarian and educational activities of Christian Missionaries in this country have received due appreciation goes without saying. If this has not been whole-hearted, it is because these works have always been utilised for furthering the proselytizing activities of the Christian Missions. What is the main object of the Christian Missions—humanitarianism or conversion? is the question that is generally asked by non-Christians in this country. The cautious and well-guarded statement in the extract given above namely, that "missionary work consists not merely in converting people to a particular religion, though that may well be its main object" leaves room for doubt and gives one the impression that among Christians themselves there is a difference of opinion as to the main object. There may be such difference of opinion among laymen, but that the ecclesiastics have no doubt on this point is made

clear by the speech made by the Metropolitan of India, Burma and Ceylon on the same occasion.

Can Christianity save the World from the Peril of Bombers?

In the speech referred to, the Metropolitan says by way of reply to Mahatma Gandhi's advice to Christian Missionaries that they must confine their activities to humanitarian work and eschew conversion from their programme of work : "I saw certain words uttered recently by a man for whom I have sincere respect and affection. Mahatma Gandhi appealed apparently to missionary bodies to abandon any desire for conversion and to content themselves with humanitarian efforts. The world at the present time has come to the conviction that what is needed is a change of heart, if war is to be avoided and the peace of the world maintained and international co-operation achieved. It is not those who are missionaries by profession who have come to that conviction but businessmen as well as men in every other walk of life. You cannot have a change of heart without the spirit of God working in the heart of men. That is the one source through which man can receive a new heart, a new purpose, a new will and the power to overcome the evil by which man is beset and which is the cause of all the world chaos and unrest of the present times. It seems to me strange that at a time when the leaders of the world, though perhaps not professing any direct conviction of the Christian faith themselves are yet convinced—that nothing but a change of heart will save the world from disastrous wars and from international strife, a great soul like Mahatma Gandhi should wish that the

Church—which is seeking to lead men to surrender themselves wholly to the presence of Christ, so that they may be delivered from those evils which hold them down

should undertake only humanitarian enterprises and not deal with that life-giving spirit which only can effect that which he is striving to accomplish—the uplift of the Harijans.

"Knowledge by itself is not going to uplift any race. Knowledge is a public danger unless it is controlled by due morality. The world sees that constantly at the present time. So, it is not by our schools giving secular knowledge that we are going to uplift the Depressed Classes. It is only when, with that knowledge is given knowledge of the one true God, and men and women are led into a vital fellowship with Him, and when that change of heart is acquired, that moral control is achieved over the knowledge which science of the present day places at the disposal of man. An aeroplane which enabled me to travel from Croydon to Denmark in a few hours, might under other conditions be used for discharging bombs upon defenceless cities to the destruction of men, women and children. Knowledge without moral control is a danger and a curse and not at all a blessing. So that is the answer which I give to Mahatma Gandhi—that we are out to do what we want done. We are out for the uplift of people, to deliver them from degradation, and it can only be done if the power of the spirit of God dwells in them. Knowledge alone might be to them a curse. You must first establish their right relationship with God and their fellowmen, and then they will be uplifted from the degrada-

tion which is now holding them down."

In this most fallacious piece of reasoning there is one line of argument that is sound. Christian Missionaries will do what they want to do, that is, convert people into Christianity, whatever others may think of it. That is quite right on the part of bodies which have come with this as their avowed purpose. It is idle on the part of any non-Christian to expect them to give up their objective as a result of advice and appeals. Their activities can be counteracted only if Hindus try to Hinduise the large masses of their co-religionists.

But what surprises one is the cool assumption that Christianity alone can bring the power of the spirit of God to dwell in man and thereby truly uplift them, and that Christianity alone can save them from misusing knowledge, say, as the speaker remarked, by teaching them to use aeroplanes for communication alone and not for the destruction of defenceless cities. There is, however, a tinge of irony in this statement, although the speaker is quite unconscious of it. For is it not strange that the same newspaper should give a report of this speech praising the virtues of Christianity as well as the busy activities of Italian bombers in defenceless Ethiopia? Ethiopia is one of the oldest Christian countries in the world; and yet it is the land of slavery, of barbarous customs, of ill-health, ignorance and what not; and it is to remedy this state of affairs and bring the light of civilization to its dark corners that Mussolini has sent his Military Mission supported by aeroplanes and machine guns that are showering destructive shells and poison gases on Ethiopian cities. And Italy too is a Christian coun-

try, the centre from which Christianity spread over the rest of Europe, and the seat of the greatest Christian Church in the world. No non-Christian can therefore help laughing at the learned

Metropolitan's claim that conversion to Christianity alone can elevate people from degradation and teach them that aeroplanes are not to be used for bombing but only for communication?

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

RAGHUNATHABHYUDAYA (Sanskrit) :
By Ramabhadramba. Published by
the University of Madras. Price
Inland Re. 1 ; Foreign R. 2.

Falling in a line with the Mathuravijayam of Gangadevi published from Trivandrum some years ago, the above Kavya in 12 cantoes celebrating the glorious achievements of the Chola King Raghunatha Nayaka with romantic descriptions, luscious images and easy movement, offers another practical repudiation of the sweeping remarks made by some, especially interested Western observers, with regard to the literacy—much less the literary achievements, of Indian womanhood prior to the British rule. The poem reveals that Ramabhadramba was a poetess of no mean order, and it can be said that it is worthy of perusal by any lover of Sanskrit poetry. The work is of special interest to the student of History as it is based on an episode of South Indian History.

B. T.

METHODS OF PSYCHIC DEVELOPMENT : By Irving S. Cooper (pp. 117). Price Re. 1. Published by the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras.

This is a brief manual of Occultism written by a fairly advanced student and approved by C. W. Leadbeater in his Foreword. It is written in a clear and simple style without introducing technical terms. The author first deals with the indications of a psychic realm, (enveloping and interpenetrating this gross world of ours), furnished by clairvoyance in waking life, sleep, trance, mediumistic phenomena, etc., and then explains why only a very small

number of persons are psychic now, i.e., able to sense and move in that realm. He next sets out the hope and belief, that after developing character, especially the traits of selflessness, sympathy and love, along with the intellect, some thousands of years hence, mankind as a whole would be psychic, i.e., would know, move about and do things without the use of the gross senses and organs. Meanwhile, in view of the present indiscriminate and reckless resort to mental medicines, hypnotism, clairvoyance, clairaudience, breath control, mediumistic phenomena, etc., performed often by ill-equipped and characterless persons for mercenary purposes, the author does well to remind his readers that, on the physical side, serious injury, especially to the eyes, the digestive organs, the lungs and the brain is not infrequently the result of such resort, while on the spiritual side, there is either no profit, or worse, there is a downfall, to all concerned. He points out that the Hatayoga and Rajayoga systems of India always stressed and still stress the great aim of life to be reached through steps (*Sadhanas*) that prepare a foundation of lofty character and then open up the larger consciousness. These Yogic steps, e.g., breath control, concentration, meditation and Samadhi, when carried on under the eye of an expert and pure Guru, are free from the above-mentioned dangers ; and psychic powers which are developed incidentally are duly subordinated to the main objective—the realisation of God, through the larger consciousness. The book is neatly printed.

B. V. N.

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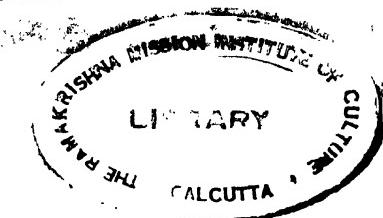
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Let me tell you, strength is what we want, and the first step in getting strength is to uphold the Upanishads and believe that "I am the Atman."
—Swami Vivekananda

THE VEDANTA KESARI

VOL. XXII]

JANUARY, 1936

[No. 9]

HINDU ETHICS

॥ ३० ॥

कामक्रोभव्यपेता ये निर्ममाः निरहकुताः ।
 सुव्रताःस्थिरमर्थादस्तानुपास्व च पृच्छ च ॥
 न बाधार्थं यशोर्थं वा भर्मस्तेषां युधिष्ठिर ।
 अवश्यं कार्यं देव शरीरस्य क्रियास्तया ॥
 न भयं क्रोधचापल्य नशोकस्तेषु विष्टते ।
 न भर्मधजिनषेव न गुणं क्रिजिदास्तियतः ॥
 देव, लोभस्तथामोहो येव सत्यांवेस्थिताः ।
 तेषु कौन्तेय रजेष्या येषां न भ्रश्यते पुनः ॥

There are some who have put away lust and anger. These selfless people have no axe of their own to grind. They are of noble vows and are firmly set on moral principles. Seek their company and take counsel with them.

To them Duty is neither a matter of mere talk nor an incentive for fame. They do it, O, Yudhishtira, because they strongly feel it needs be done. Their physical activities too result from this ethical imperative.

There is in them no room for fear, anger, vacillation and grief. Their religion is not a flag to invite public gaze; at the same time they are not encircled in any mystery whatsoever.

Greed and delusion have no sway over them. They stand by truth and are upright in behaviour. For once they swerve not from their firm-set character. O, son of Kunti, make friends with such souls.

SANTI PARVA, CH, 158, Vs. 28—32.

By Swami Saradananda

[The Master's thorough knowledge of the laws governing spiritual moods, their advantages and pitfalls, is illustrated herein with reference to striking events in his life.]

An illustration in this regard : the devoted youth who was brought to the Cossipore Garden

UNDoubtedly how numerous were the instances of this kind that we came across while in the Master's company ! One day, when he was residing in the Cossipore Garden, some Vaishnava devotees brought with them a young man who seemed quite unmindful of his surroundings. We had never seen these people coming to the Master before. The reason of their coming was to show the young man to the Master and consult his views regarding the spiritual state that the youth had suddenly entered into.

We found the devotee, with his chest and countenance flushed red, sprinkling on his person the dust from the feet of one and all in an attitude of great humility. His body was frequently subjected to tremors and the hairs rose on their ends while he was taking the name of God. On account of the continuous flow of tears, his eyes had turned red and were also swollen a bit. The body was of light-dark complexion, neither very fat nor lean ; the face and the limbs were comely and well-built. There was a tuft of hair on the crown. He had on his person an unwashed cloth, and the upper part of the body was, most probably, without any covering. The feet too were bare. He seemed wholly indifferent towards physical cleanliness or even

towards the maintenance of the body. This excited state of mind, we came to know, had suddenly appeared one day while he was singing the praise of God. Since then he was taking no food practically ; sleep had left him completely ; and he was weeping and wailing and rolling on the ground day and night for not having realised God. This state was continuing for some days.

The Master's skill in recognising the physical and mental changes brought about by spiritual states of great intensity. A guru is really a physician for the disease of the round of births.

Nowhere else have we noticed such extraordinary development of the power of recognising the changes brought about by intense spiritual states, as in the case of the Master. In Scriptures like the Guru-Gita, the Guru has been called 'the physician who cures the diseases of the round of births.' Little did we understand that there was so much meaning hidden in that term before we gained the holy association of the Master ! We had no idea whatever of the fact that the Guru is actually a healer of the mental diseases, that he can promptly recognise the symptoms appearing in spiritual aspirants at the onset of different spiritual moods and that he can prescribe to them measures to eliminate these symptoms gradually without much harm in case they are

of an uncongenial nature, or to retain them, make them normal and utilise them for still higher developments in case they are manifestations of a helpful and healthy nature. We have become firmly convinced of this only by seeing the Master's powers in this direction almost every day. When the revered Swami Vivekananda attained the Nirvikalpa Samadhi, (or the state of absolute non-duality), the Master prescribed to him, "Now, for some days you should not take any food cooked by others. Cook your food by yourself. At this stage one can accept things cooked at most by one's own mother. Any deviation from this rule is sure to lead to the loss of this state. There is no fear of danger any more when it becomes normal with the aspirant after some time." Noticing the physical discomfort of 'Gopal's mother' (a lady-devotee of great spiritual eminence) caused by nervous tension, the Master would suggest, "Well, this nervous tension is brought about by love of God. If it disappears, what else will be there to sustain you? So it must remain. However take some food when you feel too much inconvenience on this account."

Another devotee was too much attached to physical cleanliness. Because of this his mind could not rise above body-consciousness and be concentrated on God. To him the Master's private advice was, "Pray to God one day after smearing your forehead with the clay taken from dirty places." Another day the Master noticed that during devotional music the same devotee used to display physical expressions of devotional feeling in rather too prominent a manner. This was an impediment

to his further progress. Therefore the Master scolded him in the following manner : "The fellow has come to display his ecstasy before me. But can it be like this when it is genuine? In real ecstasy one dives into the deeper realms of one's being and becomes perfectly still. But what do we find here? Be quiet! compose yourself. (To the others present) Do you know the nature of this ecstasy? It is like the boiling of one ounce of milk in a big pan. The pan seems to be full of milk but remove it from the stove and you will find not a single drop even. The little quantity that was there has all stuck to the pan." Knowing the attitude of another, the Master remarked, "Well, my good man, eat, drink, and make yourself merry in every way, but not in the name of religion;" and so forth. The instances are too numerous to be cited exhaustively.

*The Master's conclusion regarding
the state of the youth.*

At the very first sight of the young man, the Master said on this occasion : "Indeed! It is preliminary to Madhura-Bhava.* But it will not last long; he will not be able to retain it. It will disappear, and that for good, the very moment he will touch a

*In Brindavan Sri Radha, the greatest devotee of the Lord Krishna, used to have on account of her intense devotion twenty-nine kinds of physical symptoms, such as laughing, weeping, tears, tremors in the body, the standing of the hairs on end, all over the body, perspiration, loss of outward consciousness, etc., which have been collectively termed the Madhura-Bhava (or the Sweet Attitude) in the Vaishnava Scriptures. The culmination of this Madhura-Bhava is called Maha-Bhava (or the Supreme Ecstasy). It is in this Maha-Bhava that these twenty-nine kinds of physical changes appear. It has been said that ordinary souls cannot have this Maha-Bhava in its fullest manifestation.

woman (with sexual appetite)." However, the group of devotees took leave with much relief, knowing from the Master that their companion had not gone crazy. Some time after this we came to know that the Master's prediction had come true. The young man met with a reversal of fortune. During the period of depression which overcame him after the passing away of that exalted state,

he met with a fall commensurate with the great eminence which he had fortunately attained during the devotional music through a momentary outburst of emotion. It was on account of this danger that the revered Swami Vivekananda was always in favour of devotion supplemented by knowledge, and would instruct others to follow this safer course.

THE CENTENARY AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

India at the Cross-roads

THESE are days of political agitation and economic unrest. Naturally the mind of India is being increasingly drawn to the solution of the problems that face her in these fields. The politician and the industrialist seem to sway the imagination of the people more powerfully than they ever did in the past. Under the dire economic, social and political conditions in which we are placed to-day, there is no wonder in the absorbing interest evinced by people in men and matters of this type. For the body is the basis of life and a physical minimum is absolutely necessary for the preservation of higher cultural ideals. Yet there is danger in this absorption, especially, in the case of a country like India—the danger that when carried too far it may result in an insensitivity to the higher values of life and the achievements of the nation in that line. Such a diversion, if it becomes normal, can be described as nothing short of a disaster in the case of India. For India has stood through the ages for a spiritual ideal—the ideal that God is greater than Mammon, that the spirit is superior to matter, that the

soul survives the flesh, that politics is subordinate to spirituality, that the highest value of life consists in God-realisation. The Supermen in this line of thought and achievement—the sages, saints and incarnations—have therefore been her heroes. The secular leaders of the past, kings, generals, politicians, and statesmen, though they had stirred the life of the nation in their own days, have like the raging waves of the sea passed away, without leaving a trace of their influence on the national mind. But the Buddhas, the Sankaras and the Ramanujas, to name but a few spiritual men of all-India reputation, continue to remain fresh in the minds of men, and their thoughts and ideals still influence the lives of countless millions in this country, except perhaps in those quarters where politics has become the gospel of life.

To-day we are being put to the test whether we have kept our old loyalties intact, or whether we have surrendered the same in our mad pursuit after worldly gains, necessary though it be at the present time. For in its present-day absorption in politics and its apostles, will India evince an interest and an enthusiasm, propor-

tionate to its importance, in celebrating an event that is epoch-making in the spiritual evolution of herself and of the world at large? That is the question facing us.

The Indian Spiritual Ideal in peril

The event we refer to is the centenary of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna, which falls in February next. It marks the end of a century after the birth of one whose life and teachings have been the centre of an all-round spiritual revival in India. At the time when he was ushered into this world the spiritual outlook in this country was more dark than at any time before. Just a little before his advent, India had lost her political independence, and the spectacular effect of this was driving men to doubt the soundness of our national ideals and institutions which could in no way save the country from such a dire calamity. This loss of faith in the spiritual ideals of India was accentuated by the new educational policy which had for its object the creation of a type of men who are Indian blood but English in their outlook and aspirations. To make matters worse, the educational system was predominated by two influences—that of the atheistic thinkers of 19th century Europe and of the early Christian missionaries from the West, both of which were united in their hostility to Indian religion inspite of the differences in their ultimate aim. As a result of this manifold attacks on the religion and spiritual ideals of India, large numbers of men who passed through the portals of Indian Universities were emerging either as professed atheists or as baptised Christians. The process, if left un-

checked, would have resulted in complete disintegration of Hindu culture and society; but at this crisis the national genius of India asserted itself in the shape of a series of reform movements which sought to liberalise Hindu society and propound systems of religion that would satisfy the tastes and requirements of the educated classes. The Brahmo Samaj with its Christianised monotheism and cosmopolitan social ideals, the Theosophical Society with its esoteric teachings and scientific explanations of Hindu religious practices and the Arya Samaj with its war cry of back to the Vedas and its militant methods of propaganda were the three most influential of these reform movements that came to the rescue of Hinduism.

Though great in ideals and valuable in their services, these reform movements, by the very nature of their constitution and their genius, were unfit to do all that was needed for the spiritual regeneration of Hinduism. The Brahmo Samaj was Christianised through and through, the Theosophical Movement emphasised more on the weird and the mysterious than on the spiritual aspect of religion and the Arya Samaj rejected all the rich spiritual experiences that India had gathered after the Vedic times. And what was more, they failed to stress the most cherished of India's spiritual ideals, the ideal that God and soul are not mere matters of speculation but facts of experience, that religions and scriptures are of no value unless their truths are realised even in this life. For this ideal India has lived through the ages, evincing a keen interest in and deep devotion to teachers and systems of discipline that promise to bring men

face to face with God. For this she has produced and supported various orders of monks and ascetics whom the society is expected to maintain and leave in leisure in order to devote themselves wholly to disciplines for the realisation of the Supreme.

A Saviour of the Racial Soul

A resuscitation of India's spiritual life required that this ideal of realisation should be held aloft before the people, and be emphasised and embodied in a life lived before the very eyes of modernised society. Nothing short of it could adequately counteract the dire effects of atheism and the zealous propaganda of Christian missionaries. The life of Sri Ramakrishna was a response of the Indian soul to this deep felt need of the times. God-realisation is the centre round which the whole of that life turns. There is, therefore, a complete absence in it of other interests—social, political or academic. His reputation for saintship and his demand for India's allegiance do not depend in the least on services rendered in fields other than what is considered purely spiritual. Of learning he had little, of wealth still less, and of reputation as a social or political leader he had nothing to boast of. He impressed his contemporaries, and still continues to impress us of later times, as one who was God-centred, as one whose whole life was a flaming passion of God-love and an ever-renewing process of God-realisation. One who accepts God as a reality and God-realisation as a possibility cannot but be struck by the towering peaks of spiritual grandeur that constitute his life-history.

The Significance of the Centenary to the Modern Conscience

To us who are earthly in our outlook, what does God mean more than the mere spelling of that word? Perhaps some of us may consider it both convenient and expedient to give him the benefit of a doubt, so that when everything else fails us in life and all our calculations are upset, we may not be debarred from possible sources of help from that unknown agency. And to still others He is a far off person useful as a purveyor of meat and as a protector in distress, a being of easy moral standards whose services are to be secured by flattery, bribe and ceremonial observances. Like the eagle we fly aloft on the wings of words, but our vision is fixed in search of earnests lying below. Like the parrot we utter the name of Rama incessantly in normal circumstances, but when the eat of adversity approaches us, we forget Rama and indulge in our native cry.

To us, therefore, beset as we are with doubt and scepticism, Sri Ramakrishna's life comes as an example of robust faith and unwavering conviction—a veritable balm of life to our lacerated heart, a refreshing shower of rain for our languishing spiritual faculties. For in him, more than in the life of any other great man of our age, we find this all-consuming and disinterested love of God, this never-failing consciousness of His presence which we so sorely need to bring harmony and peace into our lives, both individual and collective. No politician, however great, can accomplish this task of re-kindling the extinguished flame of faith in the heart of humanity. No captain of industry, however clever in re-organising the methods of production and

distribution, can give a drop of these spiritual waters to soothe the parched throat of mankind. No scientist, however versatile and inventive, can ever enthrone God in the hearts of men, or restore to them their spiritual patrimony which they have squandered in their ignorance and carelessness. The gift of Sri Ramakrishna unto mankind consists in this restoration of its spiritual heritage. This he has accomplished, not by writing learned books or through organised propaganda. Men of to-day know these methods only too well, and are not going to be impressed by a spirituality wordy in structure or pontifical in tone. His claim to the gratitude of humanity rests on a life rich in the romance of the soul and the realised certainty of Divine Presence. God is real and the world is unreal—declares the couplet well-known to the Hindu mind through the ages. God is real; therefore the world too is real—declares Ramakrishna from the fullness of his spiritual experience. Having realised the Supreme as the transcendental Absolute, he experienced the same Being as having manifested into the Supreme Personality and the Universe of Jivas and Jagat (souls and matter). Hence the world was for him inseparable from God as it was for the Rishis who exclaimed "All this is Brahman" or "Whatever that moves and whatever that does not—all that is permeated by Brahman."

"Do you know what I see!" he declares, "I see Him as all men and other creatures—they appear as veritable figures skin-bound—with the Lord within,—shaking the head or moving the hand and feet! I had once a like perception—one substance, I felt, had taken the form of the cosmos with all living creatures; like

a house of wax, with gardens, roads, men, cows and the rest, all made of wax and nothing but wax! I see, I realise, that all the three come from one substance—the victim to be sacrificed, the block for sacrifice and he who cuts down the victim for sacrifice." Thus in every experience of life, trivial as well as great, good as well as bad, pleasant as well as unpleasant, he felt the intimate presence of the Deity and imparted the same experience to those who came in contact with him. The plays of his boyhood were divine, the passion of his youth was godly, the instructions of his mature years were god-centred and the agonies of his deathbed too were only a set-off to the perpetual bubbling of divine joy in him. In this unfailing consciousness of God in all phases of life is a lesson to the modern conscience, and this lesson it can nowhere find inculcated and embodied in so forceful and concrete a manner as in the life and teachings of Ramakrishna.

The Work Done

So the Centenary of this great benefactor of humanity falls on 24th February 1936, and will be celebrated in different places between that date and February 1937. The Headquarters of the Ramakrishna Mission at Belur have drawn up a scheme for celebrating this holy occasion in an adequate manner, and are besides organising committees for doing the same in other parts. We give below a report of the Sri Ramakrishna Centenary Committee containing a short account of the arrangements that are being made in India and abroad:

A fairly good number of meetings have been held in different parts of India in which distinguished men have spoken on the life and mission of Sri Ramakrishna and stressed the importance of a fitting

celebration of the Centenary all over the country. Of these the activities of the Centenary Committee of C. P. and Benar and of the Sannyasins and general public of Benares and of the Professors and students of the Hindu University deserve special mention. We are glad to announce that Mundeswar Srimat Swarupanandaji of Mritunjay Math, the leader of the well-known Giri sect of Sadhus, has kindly consented to join the panel of Vice-Presidents of the General Committee. His Highness Maharaja Sri Aditya Narain Singh Bahadur, Kt., K.C.S.I., of Benares has been kind enough to preside over the meeting of the citizens of Benares; he has also consented to be one of the Vice-Presidents of the General Committee as well as to be the President of the Local Committee. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the Hindu University and Mahamahopadhyaya Pramadhanath Tarkabhusan were elected Vice-Presidents of the Executive Committee for the Benares Hindu University. In C.P. and Benar distinguished gentlemen like Messrs. M. S. Aney, Ganashyam Singh Gupta, N. B. Khare, S. G. Patwardhan, W. R. Puranik, Pt. Kunjabihari Lal Agnihotri and others are taking great interest in the celebration. In Patna too a general as well as a Working Committee has been formed with some of the distinguished men of the Province as members.

The activities of the Foreign Celebration Sub-Committee have been published in the papers from time to time. First we have got in touch through correspondence with several distinguished men and women of European countries, who have become members of the Foreign Celebration Sub-Committee and are trying to make the celebration a success.

Secondly, we have sent Centenary and Mission literature (in pamphlets) to nearly 30 Universities in Switzerland, Germany, France, Italy, Austria, Jugo-Slovakia and other countries.

Thirdly, Swami Yatiswarananda of the Ramakrishna Mission who has been sent to Europe on missionary work and is touring through Germany, Switzerland, France and other countries, has been asked to organise the celebration work in Europe. He is getting in touch with noted people through correspondence and personal interviews and is lecturing and organizing small

celebrations wherever he is going. He is about to publish several books, mostly translations of Swami Vivekananda's writings in German, French and Swiss. This we believe would lay the foundation of a more permanent work.

In England too there is a Swami of the Ramakrishna Order, Swami Avyaktananda, who has recently opened a centre in London and is giving lectures and interviews to the public. He is organising the celebration work in England. The London Celebration Committee has already been formed with some of Swami Vivekananda's friends and admirers in it.

In America, the Swamis in charge of the 10 different centres are taking an active part and Celebration Committees have already been formed in New York and other places. Besides, nearly 150 important people in Ceylon, S.S., Siam, China, Japan, Aden, Fiji, Kenya, Uganda, Zanzibar, Tanganyika, S. Rhodesia, S. Africa, Mauritius and S. America have been approached through correspondence and literature.

We give here some of the names of distinguished persons who are taking very keen interest in the celebration: Mr. Deona Smith of San Francisco, Prof. H. V. Glassenopp of Königsburg, M. Maurice Magre of France, Prof. O'Stein of Czechoslovakia, Mlle. M. Chovine of France, Mrs. G. T. West of California, Mr. Kathleen E. Davis of San Francisco, M. Alphonse de Chatelaubriant of France.

The Programme

Besides organising the celebration in several parts of India, the Headquarters of the Ramakrishna Mission at Belur have drawn up a scheme that is of all-India importance. The chief object of this is to do something useful that may stand as a permanent memorial of this holy occasion and help to propagate the message of the Great Master. We give below a brief account of the programme:

Permanent Memorials: (1) A nucleus of a Central Fund under the Ramakrishna Mission will be established with a view to helping forward humanitarian activities such as (a) Relief Work during flood,

famine, pestilence, etc., and (b) Mass Education—if possible, on vocational and industrial lines. (2) An Institute of Cultural Fellowship under the auspices of the Ramakrishna Mission will be established in Calcutta for the promotion of mutual understanding and goodwill among all sections of people in India and abroad. Harmony of faiths will be its central theme. It will have a house containing a spacious hall, a select library of useful books on cultural subjects and a reading room, and will arrange regular classes and lectures on Religion, Philosophy, Arts and allied subjects by Eastern and Western scholars invited for the purpose. Extension lectures will also be arranged from time to time in different parts of India and abroad as far as possible. The membership of the Institute will be open to all. (3) A Centenary Memorial Volume will be published on lines approved by the Centenary Publication Sub-Committee. It is to be a work of permanent value dealing with the evolution of Indian thought and culture in their diverse aspects from the Vedic times, written by distinguished Indian scholars, and is likely to cover about twelve hundred pages. An important section of the work will be consecrated to the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda as well as the activities of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission at the present moment in India and abroad. (4) A Centenary Album will be published containing pictures of Sri Ramakrishna, the Holy Mother and the disciples of the Master. It will also contain pictures of important centres of the Math and the Mission with brief explanatory notes. (5) Specially designed Memorial Medallion will be struck to commemorate the Centenary. (6) A suitable Memorial of Sri Ramakrishna will be erected at his birthplace, Kamarpukur, and steps will be taken to make the place easily accessible. (7) The Centenary Celebrations will have a fitting termination with the opening of the Temple of Sri Ramakrishna at the Belur Math amid appropriate religious festivities.

Besides these works of permanent importance a Convention of the monks of the Ramakrishna Order and others interested in the movement, a Convention of Hindu, Buddhist and Jain monks, a Parliament of Religions, a Conference of women admir-

ers and devotees, lectures and essays to propagate the message of Sri Ramakrishna and pilgrimages to important places associated with the life of Sri Ramakrishna are among the other important items in the programme of celebration.

Appeal to our readers

The programme, as will be seen, is a very comprehensive one, and it will require about ten lakhs of rupees, if it is to be fully carried out. The amount may look too huge, but it is not really so considering the size of India, the number of men and women who have been influenced by the life of Sri Ramakrishna, and the importance of the occasion that is to be celebrated. Besides, in addition to the items that are of purely religious and cultural interest, there are others like the stabilisation of the Relief Work and mass educational activities of the Mission, which every lover of humanity will appreciate. If we but remember that Sri Ramakrishna is a saviour of men, one whose life and teachings can alone restore the lost spiritual balance of mankind, we shall not grudge to make the sacrifice that is required to do honour unto him on this occasion. If again we remember that since the time of the Buddha no other religious leader of India has received such recognition and reverence as Sri Ramakrishna has received from people outside our country, and that in the short period of a century, we shall feel it a privilege to do our best for commemorating his Centenary. It is certain that none of us of this generation will live to witness another Centennial Celebration of the Great Master. The present occasion is therefore a unique opportunity of divine service for us, which, if lost, we can never hope to regain. Therefore in the name of all

that we deem holy and blessed in life, in the name of the Divinity that is in all, we appeal to you, reader, whoever you be, to come forward with liberal contributions for the Cente-

nary Fund and thus be blessed yourself and help others be blessed.

All contributions towards this fund may be sent to the Vedanta Kesari address.

REMINISCENCES OF THE HOLY MOTHER

By A Disciple

IT was the day of the Lakshmi Puja. Early in the morning I went to see the Holy Mother with my sister. The children were also with us. The Mother was peeling fruits in the Shrine-room. As soon as she saw us, she said, "Hallo! Come in and sit down." Two women devotees came for initiation. Learning of their desire, the Mother said, "Yes, there are two boys waiting for initiation as well." Presently another woman devotee came and expressed the desire to be initiated by the Holy Mother. The Mother said, "Very well, there are quite a number of them."

Sumati, my sister, dreamed that she had worshipped the Holy Mother as Chandi* and given her a sari** with a red border. Accordingly she brought a cloth for her; but her shyness prevented her from expressing her desire to the Holy Mother. "Sister, you tell her about it," she whispered to me. I narrated the incident of the dream to the Mother. The Mother said with a smile, "The Divine Mother of the Universe—Jagadamba—directed that dream. What do you say, my child? Where is the cloth? I must wear it." And she put on the cloth with the wide red border. She looked so beautiful.

With wistful eyes we gazed on her. Our eyes were moist with tears. Sumati said, "It would be nice if we could put the vermillion mark on her forehead." The Mother assented with a smile. But we had not taken vermillion with us. It was time for us to return home, and we all bowed down before her. The Mother said to me, "Are you also going with them?"

Devotee : Yes, Mother. I shall have to do some extra cooking at home.

Mother : Do come again.

Devotee : Yes, I will come in the evening.

The Mother offered a large quantity of sweetmeats before the Shrine. These were distributed among the children. We bade her good-bye.

In the evening I took with me some sweets made out of cocoanut kernel. The Mother said, "To-day is the Lakshmi-Puja", therefore you have brought these sweets." Gradually many women devotees arrived there with various sweet offerings. After the evening service, all these were offered to the image of Sri Rama-Krishna. The Prasad was distributed among the devotees. A woman devotee had brought all the articles of worship for the Goddess Lakshmi with her, and with these worshipped

*An epithet of the Divine Mother of the Universe.

**The wearing cloth of a woman.

*Lakshmi is the name of the Goddess of Luck.

the feet of the Mother. She prostrated before the Mother and offered one anna at her feet. The Mother said to us, "Alas ! She is in great trouble.* She is so poor." She blessed the woman.

I asked her if that European lady had come to see her on Tuesday. The Mother answered in the affirmative. The Mother had shown special favor to the lady and initiated her ; and her daughter was also cured of her illness.

As it was late at night, I took leave of the Mother.

* * *

The Holy Mother had been absent, staying in her country home at Jayantabati. After about a year she returned in the spring to Calcutta. She was extremely unwell, having been in the grip of malarial fever for a long time. I prostrated before her and she blessed me by placing her hand on my head. She asked me how I was. I gave her a little offering for her expenses and she accepted the money. At the sight of her emaciated body, I lost all power of speech. I looked at her face wistfully and thought, "Alas, how pale and weak her body is !" My sister's maid-servant was with me. She was about to touch the Mother's feet in salutation, but she said to her, " You may bow from a distance." The maid bowed from near the door-sill and went away.

The Mother was so weak that she felt it painful even to utter a word. I was seated on the floor. In the meantime Rashbehary Maharaj came

up and asked me not to talk much with her ; but the Mother now and then asked me about various things. I gave her very short replies. Then Radhu came with her child. I took him into my arms and gave him a little present. Radhu insisted on his not accepting it. The Mother said, "What is this, Radhu ? She is your sister. Why should you not accept the present when she gave it with so much love ?" The Mother accepted the money herself. She felt so sorry for the suffering of the child on account of his mother's and grandmother's negligence. Radhu protested in bitter words. The Mother said, "There is no use talking to her," and kept quiet. After a while Sarala and a few women devotees came there to see the Mother. She was lying in bed and began talking with them.

* * *

After five or six days I went to pay my respects to the Holy Mother. It was time for the evening service. The Mother lay on her couch. As I stood near her, she sat up. After my salutation, she asked me to take a seat. Some women devotees were making their Japam in the room. I had taken some Sandesh* with me. After the evening service was over, the Mother asked Bilash Maharaj to offer the sweets to the image of Sri Ramakrishna. He asked if it could be done later. The Mother said, "No, do it now." Her order was carried out. Bilas Maharaj brought some Prasadam of the Divine Mother, Kali. It was distributed among us. The Mother asked us all how we were. "I have had no fever," she said, "for the last two days. But on account of Radhu I am going to lose everything, my health, my spiritual-

* Her only son, a graduate of the University, had gone insane and left home for an unknown destination. Her husband, through grief over the son, was also half mad.

* A Bengali sweet-meat.

ity and my all. She is going to kill her child. Now Sarala has taken care of him and that will save him from premature death. Dr. Kanjilal is treating him. He said emphatically that he would not treat the child if Radhu were to look after him. I do not know Sri Ramakrishna's will. Why should a child be given to her, when she does not even know how to take care of her own person? Now she has a new disease. Dear me! I can hardly bear them. To what torture they subjected me in our country home! Did they even care for me?"

Some one came up and said that Dr. Kanjilal was there. We retired into the next room. The physician was examining the Mother when Radhu came there and said, "Please examine my arm. It bumped against

the iron post and is swollen. There are bruises at different places and they are bleeding too." The arm was bandaged with a piece of dirty linen which had been soaked in raw castor oil. Dr. Kanjilal said, "Please remove the bandage at once and wash your arm with soap. How can anyone put on such a dirty bandage? There will be infection in no time. There is poison in the very air of Calcutta." The doctor left the room. The Mother said with great sorrow, "Ah, how badly hurt is my child! It pains me to death. She is a born sufferer. Her body is so weak! Please ask Kanjilal to prescribe some medicine. Oh, Doctor, please cure her." The devotees left the room one by one. After a while someone reported that Radhu's arm had been properly washed.

RELIGION AND HUMAN PROGRESS

P. T. Raju, M.A., Sastri

[Mr. P. T. Raju is a Lecturer in Philosophy. In this brilliant article he pleads for a religion that steers clear of a personal conception of God on the one hand, and the mere substitution of an apotheosized society in place of the Deity on the other. In Advaitism he finds a religion of this type.]

Many pious readers may be shocked at the vigorous attack of Mr. Raju on the idea of a Personal God. To such we point out that in India attempts have been made from time immemorial to devise systems of religion assuring the conservation of spiritual values without however postulating a God. Certain trends of thought in the Upanishads, the Swabhava Veda, Sankhya philosophy, Buddhism and Jainism are some of the striking developments of this tendency in this country. If some modern minds want a religion of this type, no Indian theist need grudge it or feel shocked at it. In Advaitism itself there is one school of thought that minimises the importance of a personal God, and grants Him a place in their system only as a figurehead or as a concession to the popular prejudice, as Mr. Raju puts it. But in Advaitism as developed in the Tantras and the Bhagavata Purana we find a full reconciliation between Theism and Absolution in the conception of an Impersonal Personal Deity. The life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna also fully sanction the validity of this development of Advaitism. Sri Ramakrishna views the problem from the purely spiritual and not the academic point of view, and opines that while spiritual development is possible for certain minds without practising devotion to a personal God, it is neither reasonable nor desirable for an Advaitic philosopher to deny Him as long as he is entrenched in ego-consciousness. So long as the ego is a fact, He is neither a myth, nor a mere concession to popular prejudice. He is the real of real realities and can be experienced by the perfected devotee in his purified consciousness.

Spiritual experience is real—at least as real as our ego and the every day world are real. As for the difficulty encountered by Theism due to the presence of evil in the world, it must be remembered that there is also much that is good in it. It is not therefore legitimate to infer that the Deity is either good or bad in exactly the same sense we attach to these words in ordinary parlance. A man who sees a masterpiece of painting revealed only in parts and in patches takes it to be ugly and meaningless. A child, ignorant of the benefits of education bewails his lot when he is put to the hard task of learning. So are we limited in our vision and distorted in our out-look until spiritual realisation gives us the correct perspective of the cosmos and the true nature of the Deity. Let us therefore yearn, pray and strive for that realisation. Till then it is quite legitimate on our part to take our ordinary experience of goodness as more fundamentally related to the nature of the Deity than our conception of evil.

This note is to be read also along with the article "Life is Real" and the foot-notes attached to it, appearing elsewhere in this issue.]

AT no time in its history was religion so much regarded as an enemy of human progress as at present. There are some who think that, had there been no religion, mankind would have been much better off than now. It is often called the thousand-year old enemy of culture and civilisation. Some identify it with conservatism,¹ and conclude that religion constitutes the recidivous factor in human progress. Another type of criticism holds that religion is reactionary, for is not Shintoism revived in Japan in order to strengthen imperialism, and check the influx of democratic ideals?² Again, did not the church-fathers and theologians support kings whenever they asserted their so-called divine right as against the wishes of the people? Do not stagnant thought and superstition mark the nearly twelve centuries of the Dark Ages when religion reigned supreme? Religion is the opium of the people that keeps them contented with their miserable lot, instead of exhorting them to strive for a better life. It

helped the Tsar in checking and controlling his clamourous subjects by giving them the false hope of happiness in the other world if they would forego it here.

But an equally large number of facts and arguments can be arrayed to show that human progress is due to religion. How can religion be identified with conservatism, when every founder of religion is a rebel in his own age? Was not Christ crucified because he violated tradition? How much persecution did the Prophet Mohammed suffer at the hands of his contemporaries? Buddha's teachings were a reaction against the gross superstitions and inhuman sacrifices prevalent at the time. The influence of Christianity in civilising the barbarian hordes of Northern Europe cannot be over-estimated. The life of Asoka is an outstanding example of how a religion like Buddhism can work for the good on the mind of a blood-thirsty conqueror. Does not the Islamic culture owe its greatness to its religion? Did not even the Dark Ages succeed, where others have failed, in completely harmonizing instinct, intellect and emotion, and give the individual a peace that is especially not possible in the present?

¹ See Gerald Heard : *The Social Substance of Religion*, p. 66.

² See C. S. Braden : *Modern Tendencies in World Religions*.

Moreover, the evil effects of religion are due to its abuse, not to its good use. The Russian Church might have associated itself with the Tsar and his government in trying to perpetuate tyranny and injustice, but its action is an abuse of the power it wielded over the minds of the people, and of their confidence. Similarly, theologians and priests might have helped kings in proving and establishing their divine right, but theirs is an instance of corruption, not of deduction from Christ's teaching. In what other fields did the learned not support their pay-master, and invent elaborate proof, hunt up obscure instances of history, in order to demonstrate a grossly unreasonable theory, a silly fad, a treacherous act, or a wicked policy? In the name of culture and civilisation how many inhuman acts have not been perpetrated? Is it not a mere matter of policy that the State patronises one religion in preference to another, that even the greatest educationists and ministers of State encourage one professor and discourage others? It is certainly a sign of decay and degeneration that policy rules principle. Mussolini's attempt to turn the whole of Abyssinia into a slave nation is the standing example of the abuse of the noble ideal of the abolition of slavery. If so, why not treat culture and civilisation, and such great ideals as the emancipation of slaves, as the enemies of humanity?

So we have to conclude that it is not *religion*, that is the enemy of humanity, but a *religion* corrupted, and a *religion* that suited a particular place and time but is not universal and now unsuited and dangerous. A *religion* that prostitutes itself to the furtherance of a man's interests, or

to the consolidation of party's power, can no longer remain religion, because the sphere of usefulness of true religion is universal. Centuries of experience have taught mankind that the so-called dictates of God in morals and polities are fallible, if not arrant nonsense. God could not have commanded the Muslim to marry many wives, and the Christian only one. He could not have established a republic in one place and a monarchy in another. It could not have been a pleasure to him to see the rich enjoy and the poor suffer. The massacres committed in the name of religion could not have appeased his hunger. The sacrifice of a human being or a living animal does not seem to have pleased him more than a timely charity or a fervent prayer. Sometimes neither prayer, charity, nor sacrifice seems to be heard or noticed. We have no satisfactory evidence to say that God took the initiative in helping any individual, tribe or nation in the past. The British fleet sent in the time of George III to invade the new continent might have been destroyed in the storm. But also the noble efforts of Brutus and his comrades have been frustrated by their defeat. In every branch of life we find mal-adjustment and re-adjustment, and this phenomenon seems so natural that the introduction of God to explain it seems superfluous. If "God helps those who help themselves" is to be taken seriously, we have overwhelming evidence, both *a priori* and *a posteriori*, to disprove His existence. What is the use of God if we are to help ourselves? What about the failures even when we help ourselves? When the orthodox writers in Sanskrit insist on introducing a book with a benedic-

tory verse, they maintain that without the verse the book cannot be completed. But when asked : How could those disbelievers like the Baudhas complete their works without writing the benedictory verse, they reply that in their past lives they must have amassed merit which helps them now. Such replies are easy, but are the least convincing. One may point to saints and devotees, holy men who are said to have felt the presence of God and his directions, as proof for the existence of God. But who is to guarantee that they are not deluded, that what they speak of is nothing more than a wish materialised, or an inarticulate thought made explicit, which many times has no effect on any other than on the dreamy life of the suppliant and the equally dreamy and credulous lives of his followers ? We may be reminded of the saying *Samsay-alma vinasyati*, the doubting soul perishes. One may threaten that God does not like questions and doubts, and that our duty is to obey but not to question. We are ready to obey. But whom and how long ? He, the God whom we are to trust and confide in, is from the very beginning unknown. And there is no limit to the application and obedience. When our cries of agony go unheeded, are we not to question ? If God is such a tyrant, better not live in His kingdom. If there is no place over which His sway does not hold, then we may accept His presence as we accept the presence of the earthquake that can split the earth and bury us alive. But we should not be hypocrites, and say in fear what we disbelieve in truth, viz., that God is loving and merciful as are the father and the mother.

So the defence of a personal God is beset with insurmountable difficulties. The conception of Him as a father who cares for his sons, who makes them happy in spite of themselves, is without support. In face of the great evils that we find around us—the deadly diseases and the loathsome deformities, the losses and disappointments that chill whole lives and turn them into dreary and miserable existences, beautiful lives sensitive to the best and the noblest in the world but taken away before they have sweetened their own lives and the lives of others—it is difficult to believe in a personal God who is good and loving. The steam-roller of Nature seems to roll its way, crushing everything that lies before it, the best and the worst alike. This is what we see. Yet we are asked to deny in faith what we affirm in experience.

Though the conception of a personal God has to be given up, we cannot do without religion. One of the chief accusations against religion is that it divides the world into the natural and the supernatural and exhorts man to seek elsewhere what he has to seek here. Religion might be wrong in encouraging inactivity, but the sense of a beyond seems to be essential for it. Whitehead's definition of religion that it is what one does with his solitariness is oft quoted.³ The sense of this solitariness is the sense of universality, the feeling of detachment from the particular. Each one of us can experience some sort of detachment even from our own bodies, not to speak of our environment. This feeling is nothing but the sense of the beyond. But the mere feeling of it does not guarantee that what we

³ See his *Religion in the Making*.

renounce here can be obtained elsewhere. Nor does the beyond mean a beyond unconnected with the here, for the very fact that we sense it repudiates such a conclusion.

The defence of the sense of the beyond will be very distasteful to some of the leading thinkers of the present day. It is an incubus, from which, they say, we are to be free. It is a legacy of the old religion left for our generation, but being a legacy of disease the sooner it is disowned the better. Now to doubt the beyond in spite of our experience of aloofness from the particular is in a piece with the tendency of our times. Those days seem to have gone when the importance of the spirit has been felt. The intensity of feeling that marked them is now becoming less and less possible. Life has become shallow, though it has gained in width. The intensity of love, for example, between the lover and the beloved, that carries them above the mere physical, is looked on as a folly. The sanctity with which it was regarded is now a superstition, and the great purpose it served viz., the sublimation of the sensual, the turning of the material into the spiritual in which the material pales into insignificance, is apt to go unrecognised. Love means nothing more than the physical. It is a bodily want like hunger, which can be satisfied with one thing or the other, in one way or the other. It is overlooked that there are realities that are not our manufacture, and which demand recognition in our practical life. There are ways of activity from which we cannot much deviate. It is no wonder, therefore, that any talk of spirit and the beyond is resented and dreaded, or at the most treated as an excusable folly. But the shallowness of

life that is at the root of this attitude is certainly not a healthy feature.

Professor Sellars says that science has once for all solved the body-mind problem,⁴ and as it has proved that there is no mind without body the sense of the beyond is objectless. But the work of Sir Oliver Lodge and his followers is a direct repudiation of such a view, and it is too presumptuous on the part of science to deny the beyond. Science may not be able to fathom its depths, its methods and apparatus may be too crude to handle its delicate intricacies, but this fact is no ground to deny it. It is not a beyond with an unbridgeable gulf between it and this world, but it is a beyond in the sense of a better of everything extending infinitely upwards. It is that which makes us yearn for something always higher.⁵ Professor Sellars wants to substitute the religion of Naturalism and Humanism for the existing religions. And he thinks that this substitute will be the religion of the philosopher. But whether all philosophers agree here is doubtful. That the existing religions need modification none can deny. As a matter of fact, they are undergoing modification. But we feel doubtful whether the religion of Naturalism and Humanism can be a satisfactory substitute. The sense of the beyond is the sense of the extension of ourselves beyond the world of time and space. And we feel through that sense that something continues with us in the beyond. But Naturalism tells us that, when our body perishes, there is an end of ourselves. If it is true, the question cannot but arise why we should not

⁴ See his *Religion Coming of Age*.

⁵ Cp. *Bhagavad Gita*, X, 20 ff.

make the best of our momentary existence. The talk of ideals, like service of humanity, would be meaningless without any basis in the nature of things. As Humanism teaches, man may be the centre of the universe. But then every man would be the centre of his own universe, and his interests would be the interests of the universe. If one confronts him with the question—Why should I waste my life in pursuit of an unselfish ideal? or if the soldier in the battle-field asks us why he should meet death for his country?—the humanist has no answer. Can he say that what the questioner stands for, what he lives for and dies for, is a value that would be conserved for him, not for the generations that succeed him? But if there is a beyond where he continues to live, we can assure him that in this life he has earned a value which follows him to the next. Of course, the generations that follow derive benefit from him. Yet he too has achieved something for himself, which he would never lose. The indispensability of the beyond is shown by the fact that even in Russia, the inveterate enemy of religion, the emphasis from a present-perfect society is being shifted to a future one. "The paradise offered in Russia is the Communist State of the Future."⁶

But how can this future heaven satisfy the present sufferer? He may be compelled at the point of the bayonet to work and die for the society. But what moral justification would there be for exacting work from him if he is promised in return

nothing but suffering and in the end utter annihilation? He wants a promise of the conservation of value. And belief in such conservation, as Höffding says, is religion. It is not enough if this value is inherited by the succeeding generation and preserved in them. There is a line of thought among moral philosophers that is akin to what is being criticised. Accretion of value through perishing species and generations is the way of progress until a perfect world evolves like Professor Alexander's Deity. This Deity or the perfect order of society is a future event like the Communist State. In it will be borne people, who, sitting on the dead bones of their ancestors, will enjoy the fruits of their struggle in creating and contributing to the value of the Deity. But this is a conception which is not morally attractive. Are those who contribute to the Deity to be nothing? Is their struggle to be of no use to them? Does the increasing purpose that runs through the ages treat the individuals as mere tools for its increase? Even Professor Mackenzie, who is inclined towards the view of an increasing purpose that runs through evolution, admits that this view implies "a degree of confidence in the evolutionary forces that are to work in the course of human history that it is not always easy to justify."⁷ There is evolution. But it is a continual dialectic—though not necessarily of contradictions—of maladjustment and readjustment, of want and its satisfaction, and of the disturbance of order by the unexpected appearance of a novel factor and the re-establishment of order. Where this dialectic will end, and how it will end,

⁶ See Edwin R. Embree: "The Rebirth of Religion in Soviet Russia", in the *International Journal of Ethics*, July, 1935, p. 427.

⁷ *Manual of Ethics*, p. 209.

if it is to end in Nature itself, is beyond our comprehension to understand. Natural evolution until it culminated in the life of man seems to be amoral. Adequate evidence is lacking to attach moral significance to it. As Sir Herbert Samuel says, the species that underwent it made no conscious contribution to it.⁸ But after consciousness has evolved, we cannot understand what other evolution than the cultural and the spiritual can there be afterwards. But if the end of evolution is Deity or a perfect society that is to appear in the indefinite future, then the individuals who pass away before that event must certainly be deprived of the bliss in bringing about which they give up their lives. "Make the best of the moment," will therefore be not an unreasonable and immoral advice to them.

It may be tempting to press here that the contributions which these individuals make to the evolution of the future heaven cannot but be conserved, and therefore the value for which they live cannot be lost. But it is lost for them, though not for the succeeding generations. That we live in our future generation is only a metaphor which we are not inclined to extend overmuch in cool moments of consideration. If I am lost, everything is lost for me. I should not be lost, and with me should continue the value I live for. This is what religion has to guarantee for me. This guarantee again is not identical with what science vouchsafes, viz., that no matter is lost, that what is called destruction is only dissipation into constituent elements. Man dies, and his body becomes one with the universal matter. But the fact does

not afford comfort. What we want is the continuity of consciousness, a sense of identity, and along with it the value we appraise.

Yet one grave doubt remains. It may be a good wish, a dream of the heart, a cry of desire, that there should be such a beyond. If there is a beyond, it may guarantee the conservation of value for us. But who is to guarantee the reality of the beyond itself? The vague feeling we have of the continuation of consciousness beyond the mundane, the feeling we have of our aloofness from the particular is not conclusive evidence. It may be that the universe is indifferent to human values, that our death is a return to dust. But besides the recent psychic experiments, our sense of the beyond cannot be dismissed as of little value. It is the doorway to infinite possibilities in the spiritual realm, which can only be experienced, but not proved. If the ideal state of life is a future event for Humanism, Socialism, and Evolutionism, if it cannot be prophesied when exactly that state can come into being, and if that state is as much open to doubt as the beyond, these views have no right to declaim against another for an inability from which they themselves are not free. There are systems of philosophy which prove the reality of the beyond. If its reality is essential for religion as support for the human individual, if our world-view has a place for it, and if our experience points to it, it would be too presumptuous to deny its truth.

What should be the nature of religion, then, that would meet the demands of the present day? It must dispense with the personal God, who interferes with everyday affairs, and dictates in conventional matters. Thus

⁸ See his *Practical Ethics*.

we shall not only be not obliged to write a theodicy, but also shall not give an opportunity to those that seek self-aggrandisement by taking His Name. The supernatural dread that by disobeying His so-called dictates we invite his wrath upon us will be known to be a fiction, by the spell of which we have been so long blinded to truth. That man is the maker of his own destiny will be realised to be truer than it was when God was taken to be the disposer of every thing. That the forms of moral and political institutions have only a relative worth, and have been set up by man in his attempt to obtain the highest value of his existence will be brought home to us more convincingly than ever.

Though this religion does away with God, it should treat the world as spiritual. Neither matter nor space-time is the truth of what we see. The world as we see it is the manifestation of spirit that extends far away beyond the present world. This spirit has a set course for the individual to follow, and it is his duty to discover what exactly it is and follow it. Individuals and nations, and even humanity at large, might have erred in discovering the true course, but they have to know it. There have been fortunate individuals who have known it, but failed to communicate it aright, and hence the blunders of past religions. It is not necessary for individuals to wait hoping for universal salvation, because the spirit is his who knows it at any time. Its eternal presence precludes the miserable prospect of utter annihilation and unrealised value, which the evolutionists hold before us.

Now remains the question of the continuation of one conscious identity

and the conservation of value realised here. The continuation of our identity can be assured only if the beyond is in some way identical with our self. And the conservation of value can be secured if there is something in the beyond that is identical with the value realised here. And the value must be something which is capable of being carried over. If this value is a material good, it cannot be so carried. So what is of value must be a state of man's self which as having realised that value must be more valuable than it was when it did not realise it. It must, again, guarantee the realisation of value unrealised in this world in spite of man's efforts. Such a beyond can be no other than the Universal Self of which the Upanishads speak. Its eternal presence vouchsafes the individual perfection and salvation at any time without the necessity of waiting for the future consummation of human existence. Only, one has to try and know the way to perfection. It can be experienced here as well there, because it is continuous and identical with our selves.

In spite of our repetition, we have to warn again that the beyond should not, and does not encourage idleness and lethargy. That perfect state is not guaranteed to the man who is not seriously after it. The desire for it must be a desire for experience, not merely an intellectual curiosity to know what it is like. Its eternal presence is not reason for inactivity, just as the distant presence of water is not a reason for man's not going to it in order to quench his thirst.

Such a beyond as meets our present demands is found only in Advaita philosophy. Its religion is a philosophical religion, and therefore satisfies

the philosopher. It does not admit God, except as a concession to popular prejudice, and so gives no opportunity to the bad uses to which the idea is put. It satisfies the craving for the spiritual by regarding the world as the manifestation of the spirit. It admits the truth of Naturalism, because it recognises no God who interferes with natural phenomena. It contains the essence of Humanism by treating the Self as the truth of the universe, and as the ultimate value to be realised. Of course, as expounded in times far remote from ours, it overemphasised renunciation in its crudest sense, as if it forgot that the world is the manifestation of the spirit, and that it is in and through this world that the spirit has to be realised. When the higher is reached through the lower, the lower as such has to be renounced. But if the lower is renounced before we even know what the higher can be like, before we are seriously after the higher, that renunciation will not make for ascending to the higher, but only to descending to the still lower. And this renunciation cannot be an integral part of Advaita philosophy and religion. Renunciation and inactivity preached by Advaita are not meant

for the brute who is ignorant of the values this world possesses, but for one who has already experienced them and wants something higher.

Buddhism also does not recognise God. But it is generally regarded as nihilistic, recommending complete annihilation of one's self as the goal. So the two sources of consolation which religion is to provide, the continuation of our conscious identity and the conservation of value, cannot be obtained from it. If it can give us these two as required above by undergoing the requisite mortification, it will differ very little from Advaita. In fact, all schools of Buddhism are not nihilistic. And it is even doubted whether Lord Buddha is a nihilist. On the other hand, Sankara, the founder of Advaita, is called a Bandha in disguise, *prachchananabandha*. However, Advaita contains a system of thought that possesses the possibility of a great future. But the essential truth of that system has to be extricated from much that is temporal and provincial. Then it will be a religion that makes for human progress by insisting upon the individual's own activity, teaching him that he himself is the master of his destiny.

SYNCRETISM AND CHRISTIAN THINKERS 241

By An Observer

[Christian religious dogma is one of the most uncompromising and unyielding in its kind. Our anonymous contributor tries to show by means of this extract the reactions of this dogma to the liberal religious ideas of Hinduism.]

I

THE following is an article contributed by the Rev. L. P. Larsen to the *Student World* under the heading "Syncretistic Tendencies Today":

For the last forty years a type of Indian religious teaching has been spreading in the West. In the beginning it was generally spoken of as Neo-Hinduism; and the work of spreading these ideas was for some time limited to America. Now these activities are better known by the name of the Ramakrishna Mission, and are not confined to the New World only. A report was recently published of the promising work done within the last year in several countries on the continent of Europe.

The basis of all the work of the Ramakrishna Mission is the conviction that all religions are fundamentally one, this statement being primarily applied to Hinduism and Buddhism, Islam and Christianity. When men come close enough to each other to get behind the words and forms which at first are felt to be barriers and causes of conflict, the underlying unity of longing and striving, of need and of aim, becomes increasingly clear. Those who have never been intimately acquainted with the people of any other religion or Church than their own are not troubled by questions of this kind. It is only when different religionists come close enough together, and begin to know each other more intimately, that syncretis-

tic ways of thinking begin to suggest themselves. And they are not prompted merely by growing acquaintance and better understanding. There is also behind them a strong consciousness of the harm that has been caused in human lives by religious conflicts.

One does not necessarily agree with syncretistic teaching because of the fact that one realises what forces have been at work in it. But it continues to be true that error lives only by the element of truth that is in it. And syncretism, as we meet it so strikingly in the work of Ramakrishna Mission, has in it elements of truth which we cannot afford to ignore. We must come to understand one another better where disturbing and harmful differences are felt. Ignorance is a poor foundation for friendliness; but it is also a very regrettable ground for conflict and strife. Those who have come to know at close quarters some of the activities of the Ramakrishna Mission in India cannot fail to think of them with respect and admiration, even if it is not possible to answer satisfactorily all the questions one is thereby forced to consider.

Among the Hindus, such elastic and comprehensive attitudes in religious questions have from very old times been common phenomena; and one can see, in a measure, why it has been so. But it is not from Hinduism alone that syncretistic activities are at present proceeding. The Bahai

Movement has grown up within the world of Islam. Its followers may not be regarded by orthodox Muslims as real followers of Islam, just as some strictly orthodox Hindus would doubtless shake their heads at the Ramakrishna Mission type of Hinduism. But the Bahai Movement in its own way, just like the Rama Krishna Mission in its way, is trying to offer to torn and distracted humanity a religious way which all may follow, a way where differences are not felt to be a source of sufferings and loss. And there are men in many parts of the world who listen to the Bahai teaching because they are tired of quarrelling with others over their religious differences.

Recently word has come from India of an address given by a great representative of Burmese Buddhism to representatives of orthodox Hinduism on the essential unity of Buddhism and Hinduism. The close connection between these two systems is a plain historical fact. And the question of the connection between them recently became more prominent, when the place that is associated with the memory of Gautama's enlightenment, after being managed for many years by the Hindus, was given back again to the Buddhists. The presence of Rev. Ottama from Burma as president at the meeting of the Hindu Mahasabha had doubtless more of political than of religious motives behind it. And it has not by any means been approved by all Hindus. Yet it is characteristic of the strong present-day tendency to overlook religious differences.

But is not this tendency something that we all have reason to respect and to rejoice at? Do we not need to strengthen all the forces that make

for friendliness and co-operation among men. If it is such things as these that are meant by syncretism, will it then not be a serious matter if Christianity in all its missionary activities thinks of it only as an error and a danger? That is what some people are seriously feeling.

And is not the Apostle Paul, they may add, pointing us in the same direction when he speaks of his being "a Jew to the Jews and a Greek to the Greeks" as a necessary condition of his being able to do aright the work he has been sent to do?

When we know the man who said this, there is no room for doubt that he did not thereby wish to describe a shapeless and wobbly life, that had no character of its own, and could be entirely different things in different places. That was not the kind of man the apostle Paul was or strove to be. It is plain that what he is describing in these words, as a necessary qualification of a messenger of Christ's Gospel, is the mind that is anxious not to be an outsider or a stranger among the people to whom he wants to commend the Gospel. He realised that the work which Christ's servants are sent to do can succeed only if the hearers look upon them with such confidence and openness of mind as are nowhere shown toward those who are regarded as foreigners.

It was a desire of the same kind that made the Saviour use the name, "the Son of Man," about Himself. It is very striking that His disciples never used it about Him, though He called Himself constantly by that name. There were many things that made Him different from those around Him. It was not the kind of differences which separates the white foreigner from the people of India.

But the differences were not less real ; and they were not less liable to put a distance between Him and those around Him. But unless men came to Him with the free and open and confident mind which we have only among our own people, He knew He could not get the truth of God commended to their hearts and consciences. Therefore He kept saying : I am one of you, the Son of Man. When Christ uses this term, and when the Apostle Paul wants to be a Jew to the Jews and a Greek to the Greeks, it is a matter that has nothing to do with syncretism. The words refer to a very important matter indeed. But it is a question, not of the testimony to be borne, but of the way by which alone the testimony can reach "the conscience of every man."

And on this side the work of Christian missions has had such great defects that it is not strange if some are inclined to give all their attention to avoiding the danger on that side of the path. And all the fear of syncretism—which we do not wish to minimise—must not be allowed to lessen our desire to get so close to the people among whom we are to work, in mutual understanding and frankness and confidence, that the way is open from heart to heart. For then only does it become possible to commend the truth to every man's conscience.

It is a serious matter that the work of evangelism has been done by "foreign" missions. As long as we are foreigners in the eyes of the people, we are not fully qualified to prepare the way of the Lord. The messengers of the Gospel must be so near to the people to whom they wish to proclaim it that the feeling of foreignness disappears. For that calls

forth, if not definite opposition, at least cautious reserve, and where that prevails the way to the conscience is blocked. To be a Jew to the Jews and a Greek to the Greeks is everywhere a vital question to the evangelist.

II

We shall now give the views of another responsible Christian ecclesiastic on the subject of syncretism. Some time back by way of comment on Mahatma Gandhi's request to the Christian missionaries to give up their conversion activities, His Grace Dr. L. Mathias, the Catholic Archbishop of Madras, made the following remarks :

The statement made once again by Mr. Gandhi on missionary work takes one's breath away. We note that in his new attack the Mahatma brings forward his own 'detached view' while we missionaries following the commands of Christ, cannot consider the order of God as a view at all. The preaching of the Gospel is a duty imposed on us by the Divine founder of Christianity. We shall be false to that duty if we do not discharge it to the utmost of our capacity. We do not believe in conversion by force or fraud, or by means of material inducements, which unfortunately many Hindus believe to be the secret of our success.

Mr. Gandhi's declaration that "all the great religions of the world are true" is only an unfortunate and flippant expression of the spirit of that dreadful indifferentism so widely prevalent at the present day. A little reasoning will convince any impartial and sincere inquirer that all religions cannot be true. Truth is one and indivisible. Since the various religions are at variance, it naturally follows

that wherever they are in conflict, if one possesses the truth the others must be in error. The great religions of the world do differ fundamentally in their respective creeds, cults and moral codes. All these irreconcilable beliefs and practices cannot be equally pleasing to God, who is the way, the truth and the life, unless one is prepared to admit that the Supreme Being is indifferent to truth and error. We can understand that, being a politician, Mr. Gandhi may be little interested in inquiring after religious truth and less inclined to perceive what is right and wrong in his own religion.

The Mahatma would have us confine our activities to 'humanitarian service without the ulterior motive of converting India !' We do not make any secret of the fact that our first and chief motive, and not merely an 'ulterior motive,' is to conquer India for Christ ; not only the 'unsophisticated villagers' but 'all men of good will.' The main object of the Christian mission is to lead souls to God and show them the way to life eternal. We cannot confine our work merely to social service without being guilty of a grave dereliction of duty. The fact is that, as Christians believe, God has vouchsafed mankind a revelation, embodying a definite religion. If He, the Truth, revealed a religion, it follows it must be true, and that all other religions that disagree with it must be false. If He did reveal a religion, it must be accepted by all those to whom it is adequately presented under the grave responsibility of closing their ears to Truth.

The Divine Founder of Christianity commissioned his Church to carry the Gospel to the farthest confines of the earth, not excluding India. The

messengers of the Gospel are, therefore, bound in duty to spread the truth everywhere. But no one is compelled to accept the teachings unless he is convinced of its truth.

We quite agree with Mr. Gandhi that 'whether we wish it or not what is true in the Hindu faith will abide, what is untrue will fall to pieces.' Christ has solemnly proclaimed that 'heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.' Every creature will pass away, even Mr. Gandhi, but Christ is to-day yesterday and forever, and His command shall remain.

III

The extracts given in the preceding sections represent two interesting points of view in modern Christian thought—the first a hesitant tendency to recognise at least something good in other forms of religious experience, and the second that offensive dogmatism and swaggering aggressiveness of the Catholic type of Christianity. Regarding the latter we need not say much here. Truth is one ; all religions differ ; hence only one of them can be true ; this true religion is Christianity, perhaps only the Catholic form of it. Very logical to be sure, but does this view show any spiritual insight ? It represents the spirit that begot the rack, the thumbscrew and the Inquisition in the past. The genius of this brand of religion is embodied more in the personality of Mussolini than in that of Jesus Christ.

The Rev. L. P. Larsen who writes on syncretism seems to be struck by the cordial reception that several spiritually minded people in Europe and America are extending to the idea that the central truth of all religions is the same. He is, however, at one

with the Catholic ecclesiastic quoted before, in his conviction that one religion alone can embody the spiritual Truth, but the success of the opposite idea makes him pause and think. An error cannot in itself succeed ; it must therefore have some element of truth, and it is on the strength of this truth that this erroneous idea flourishes. The truth in syncretism is a mask of its essential error. A veritable ass in tiger-skin is syncretism—so thinks the Rev. L. P. Larsen.

All these critics fail to understand the spirit of genuine syncretism, when they lose sight of its fundamental postulate that religion is not dogmatising but realisation. It is not that syncretism has been propounded by a few clever brains as a useful device for easing strained religious situations. According to Sri Ramakrishna, the prophet of syncretism in modern India, the Truth of God is a matter of experience for the really spiritual man. The highest types of these illumined souls perceive that even where differences in experience are reported, they spring from partiality of knowledge and illumination, and not from any absolute falsity of the experience. The blind men, experiencing the elephant through the sense of touch, describe it as a pillar, a wall, a spear, a snake, etc., according to the limited views of the animal that they have gained, and go on furiously fighting to maintain the truth of their own respective views. The man with vision, however, perceives that they have all come across an elephant and that their descriptions are true as far as they go ; but neither their experiences nor their descriptions of the elephant exhaust the nature of the animal. So too people who see a chameleon occasionally,

may fight over its colour, but the man who lives at the foot of the tree on which the chameleon lives and has seen the creature put on varying colours perceives the truth as well as the error in the positions of these fighters. The error does not consist in the falsehood of their claim to have seen the creature or even in their description of it ; it consists in their mistaking a phase of truth for the whole of it and as a consequence denying the possibility of other views. Religions of the world are only such partial truths. To say that the essence of any religion is a mixture of truth and error will be wrong and misleading, as logical brains like the ecclesiastics quoted above will take error to be the contradictory of Truth. All religions are true, because they embody the experiences of the seers of God and lead their sincere followers to those experiences of Him. But they go astray when they assume they have exhausted His Being, and begin to dogmatise and fight on that assumption. For even the great seers are like tiny ants who can carry but a small grain from the huge sugar-heap which is the Deity. Therefore stop fighting, dogmatising, and reviling each other in the name of religion, says Sri Ramakrishna, but try to realise the Deity as conceived by your religion. If it pleases Him, He will give you even the highest form of illumination, namely, Vijnana, in the light of which you will realise the Truth of all religions. Meanwhile be like a daughter-in-law in a joint family in your attitude towards the different religions ; she loves her own husband intensely, yet does she entertain affection and regard for the other members of the family.

If the syncretism preached by Ramakrishna is finding acceptance among sincere religious aspirants, it is because of this insistence on realisation as the essence of religion, and the broadness of outlook resulting from it. For thoughtful men all the world over are beginning to perceive that ignorance and selfishness are the parents of dogmatism, narrowness and fight, and that breadth of vision

and sympathy of outlook are the sure indications of wisdom.

Regarding Rev. Larson's conception of Christian syncretism, namely, to free the stamp of alienage from the methods of Christian propaganda, we need only remark that it may be a better way of attracting Indians to the Christian fold, but it is no syncretism at all.

LIFE IS NOT A DREAM

By D. Subramiah

[The following is a criticism of Mr. C. Mahadeviah's article under the caption "Is our Life a Dream?" published in the November issue of the *Vedanta Kesari*. The foot-notes form Mr. Mahadeviah's rejoinder to the criticism. The important question of the place of God in spiritual life is raised in this controversy. Our views on the question have been given in the note on the article "Religion and Human Progress" printed elsewhere in this issue.]

We have been treated to a valuable article on this interesting topic by Mr. C. Mahadeviah in the November issue of the *Vedanta Kesari*. He has come to the conclusion that there is no difference between the waking state and the dream state and that therefore both are unreal—a conclusion diametrically opposed to that arrived at by Visishtadvaitins, who while holding that both states

— At the very outset I have made it clear that there is, and must be, some difference between waking and dream; for otherwise the two words w^orld become unnecessary to denote them. I have further explained the difference by stating that waking is a present state and hence unstultifiable, whereas dream is a past state already stultified. This difference does not, however, guarantee any 'reality' to waking. For on further examination both the states are found to possess the common characteristic of transiency as contrasted with the witness which is permanent (See Shankara's Commentary on Brahma Sutras 2, 1, 9).

are similar yet conclude that they are real. Longfellow is also indirectly made a target of attack, as he seems to be a Visishtadvaitin in this sense, and the writer brings the poet's negative words "Tell me not in mournful numbers that life is but an empty dream" as well as his positive words "Life is real, life is earnest" into his criticism.²

In noting the similarities and the dissimilarities of the two states, the writer has failed to note—we make bold to point out—one more aspect in

2 Visishtadvaitins may say that dream is as real as waking. But this is clearly contrary to universal experience; and as Shankara says, "Even if a hundred Shrutis were to say that fire is cold and dark, they cannot be considered to be authoritative" (Commentary on the Gita 18, 66.) Also it must be pointed out that Longfellow is not a Visishtadvaitin in this sense. For he emphatically protests against calling life which is "real," an "empty dream." The implication is clear, viz., that dream is unreal.

each category. The Mandukyopanishad and the Gaudapada Karika thereon which treat of this subject point out that both the dream state and the waking state are similar in so far as they are both pervaded by the Primeval Ignorance (Thamas), and the seer (witness) sees a second object (Dvaita) in both.³ These two states are distinguished from dreamless sleep (Sushupti), as in the latter state the seer (witness or more correctly subject) does not see any second thing but enjoys himself, though pervaded by darkness or Thamas ; and hence this state is said to be akin to Advaitic experience. A fourth state, that is, Thuriya is described as being one in which the subject is neither in the waking nor dream state, as he does not see a second thing ; nor in the Sushupti state (dreamless sleep), as he is in a flood of light and is not pervaded by larkness or Thamas. Swami Vivekananda, in noting the difference between Sushupti and Thuriya, states that one who comes back from Samadhi returns a wiser man than he was before Samadhi, while one who wakes up from dreamless sleep returns the same man, if not a fool⁴

3 I have pointed out that there is in dream, as in waking, a complete universe. Is this not enough to show that the seer sees a second object in both ?

4 It is a mistake to identify Thuriya and Samadhi. Samadhi, whatever else it may be, is a state which is experienced, whereas Thuriya is the Atman itself, the experient, the witness and the substratum of all states. Whatever may be the differences between Sushupti and Samadhi, they are one in that the mind is quelled in both. Hence for purposes of Vedantic enquiry they stand on a par with each other. *सुषुप्तिसमाधादौ*, in Sushupti, Samadhi, etc., is a common phrase in Shankara's writings.

Coming to the dissimilarity of the waking state and the dream state we need not point out the so very common experience of everybody that one who dreams sees all the objects therein in his own mind or body, while one who is awake sees objects outside his body except when he is absent-minded and is in a state of "day dream" or "waking dream."⁵ Though one may be sleeping at Madras one may dream as if one is bathing in the Ganges at the Hanuman Ghat at Benares. This difference of "inside and outside" is perceived so long as the primeval Ignorance is not cast off, that is, so long as the mind has not become "no mind." Speaking of this seer (witness or Upadrashta) Sankara in his Gita Bhashya 13:22 says, "The body, the sense of sight, Manas, Buddhi and the self are the seers. Of these the body is the most external seer, and viewed from the body inwards the Self is the innermost and nearest seer and beyond him there is no seer in the interior. This being the nearest seer He is spoken of as Upadrasta." The seer and the seen must be coalesced into a single consciousness for realising the supreme Reality. This Reality cannot be a subject of talk or discussion but has to be experienced and this can be done only by very few, i.e., not even by one in a thousand, as Lord Sri Krishna says in Gita.

मनुष्याणि मरणेषु कवित्वात्ति भिरुदये ।

यततामपि विद्वान् कवित्वात्ति तत्पतः ॥ 7.3. ॥

"Among thousands of men one perchance strives for perfection

5 The critic has missed the important point that the dream body is independent of the waking body even as the dream world is independent of the waking world. Even as one sees objects outside his body in waking, one sees objects outside his (dream) body in dream.

and even among those who strive and are perfect, only one perchance knows Me in truth." There is, therefore, no use in speculating upon a Reality which is of no avail for us who are dogged by this primeval ignorance or Thamas at every turn, and are therefore forced to take refuge under the three kinds of realities, viz., Vyavaharika, Pratibhasika and Paramarthika realities for purposes of satisfying our limited understanding.⁶

"Anything less than real must be unreal. We cannot speak of a thing as half real or three-fourths real. In this sense compared with the witness, waking is as unreal as dream"—so says Mr. Mahadeviah. But the reality of the witness cannot be conceived so long as we are thinking or seeing with our mind which cannot think of any reality without an unreality, and in fact the so-called "full reality" cannot but be a fractional reality. The Gita describes the self as neither Being nor non-Being and as that which is the Being, non-Being and what lies beyond. It is something of which we cannot form

6 In speaking of reality as 'speculated upon' the critic has missed the essential characteristics of the *three-states* method of enquiry which distinguishes it from all speculative methods. The reality which is grasped by a rigorous enquiry into our experience of the three states, is a reality which is intimately experienced. It is our own self which is revealed as the ever-present witness on which, as substratum or Adhishana, the states of waking, dream, and sleep, appear and disappear one after another. It is exactly what the critic calls 'primeval ignorance' that prevents men from grasping this reality which is their own Self, although they are constantly experiencing the three states. And let the critic note that it is only for "us who are dogged by this primeval ignorance" that this understanding is necessary, and not for men who are free from its sway.

any conception by thought and words, and hence mere logomachy about it does not help us any the least.

We have to confess that since Sankara and Ramanuja, Indian philosophy has not advanced a bit further, and we are not therefore competent to sit in judgment over them and to decide as to whose views are correct. But we find the charge often made, though wrongly, that the Jagannithya (world-illusion) theory of Sankara is responsible for our present state of being a lazy and good-for-nothing people. We, being what we are at the present day, must therefore take inspiration from Longfellow and Ramanuja and serve humanity leaving the capable few to realise Sankara's Advaita, that is the Ultimate Reality. Until we dissolve the physical consciousness, the vital consciousness, the mental and the intellectual consciousness into the supreme consciousness, that is to say so long as we are in the stage of aspiration

7 The idea seems to be that the "full reality" cannot be conceived by the mind which can indulge only in "mere logomachy." It must, here, be pointed out that mere experient of a state where the mind is quelled but consciousness is still aglow, is not enough to produce the knowledge of the Self as the witness and substratum of the appearance of worlds. This knowledge can arise only as the result of an enquiry into the nature of the different states. It is clear that such an enquiry is possible only when the mind is working. But when once such knowledge arises as the result of such enquiries, it (knowledge) is realised to be of the nature of intimate experience and not of external speculation and logomachy. If one should still call this a knowledge of "fractional reality" he shall have to show how he got the idea of "full reality;" for without an idea of a 'full' no idea of a 'fraction' can arise.

and struggle, we have to learn lessons not only from our own Acharyas but also from Western writers including Longfellow.

We cannot better close this subject than by quoting Sankara's Dakshinamurti Stotra:

विष्णु दर्शकशयमानं नगरीतुल्यं निजान्तरं
पश्यत्वात्मनि मायाय बहिरिकोदृतं तथा निदया
यः साक्षीकुरुते प्रबोधसमये स्वात्मानमेवाद्यं
तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नम इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये ॥

I bow down with all reverence to the Southward-faced Lord (Dakshinamurti) embodied as the venerable teacher who perceiving in his own Self, like a mirrored reflection of a city, within himself, the universe sprung up to objective existence as if through an illusion, experiences as when asleep at the wakeful state i.e. Self alone without a second.

Until we realise with Sankara that what we see before us as the world is

nothing but our own self and until we discipline ourselves to reach that state of spiritual maturity, we have to hold fast to Longfellow's view that life is not a dream but is real and earnest. We have to posit an Isvara or God whose Visvarupa is the world we see before us and serve Him to the best of our capacities, each in his own humble sphere without resorting to Sankara's Advaita to justify our physical laziness or intellectual dullness.⁸

⁸ No one need be anxious that 'we have to hold fast to the view that life is not a dream but is real.' For that is the view of the common man to which he sticks like a leech. As for positing Isvara and serving him, let those who can take such things on trust do it. But, if we believe that such a position is not ultimately true and that truth is something different from it, it is our duty to exhort men to leave their false positions and rise to Truth, the attainment of which is alone the supreme end and aim of life.

THE CLASH OF CULTURES

By Swami Ghanananda

[The following is a part of the writer's introduction to his forthcoming book entitled "Sri Ramakrishna and the Harmony of Religions," which he has written as a tribute to the memory of the great Master on the occasion of his Centenary.]

WHEN Columbus and Vasco de Gama gambled with luck and sailed by the stormy seas, little did men know that Modern Europe was in the making. The age of navigation was to shift the centre of commerce and civilisation from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic; the countries bordering on the latter were to become the leading nations of the earth; and the forces awakened by the creative urge that had broken through Mediaeval limitations and was expressing itself through the Renaissance were to reinvigorate

Europe and confer on her the leadership of the world. Time was when the East had played her role and Greece and Rome had to struggle with Oriental Empires, and Europe had to contend against the Huns and the Arabs, the Mongols and the Ottoman Turks. But the course of history was reversed in the fifteenth century when Europe was being born anew, imbued with fresh vigour and vitality. In a few centuries she attained mastery over the East, may took the world by storm; the political expansion and consolidation that

followed gave a definite turn to the social and economic life of nations. By the end of the nineteenth century which saw the age of applied science and industrial enterprise on a stupendous scale, she had left her impress everywhere on the world. Canada and Australia—the daughters of England—as well as the United States are replicas of Modern Europe : some one or other of the European powers owns, controls or influences large countries and territories of Asia, Africa and South America.

Such world-wide conquest and widespread commerce have promoted intercourse between races and peoples. It is a fact of unique importance in the history of the world to-day that all its races and peoples have been brought together as they had never been before. The miracles of science and the marvels of organisation have broken down the physical barriers that once separated towns and cities as well as countries and continents from each other. The railway and the steamship, the telegraph and the telephone, the wireless and the aeroplane have annihilated distance and reduced the dimensions of the earth into those of a single vast city ; an ever-increasing industry, an ever-expanding commerce and a system of international banking have almost converted the world into one large workshop.

I

The breakdown of the physical barriers that once separated the different parts of the globe has but brought into bold relief the conflicting forces and elements in the world to-day. It has presented more vividly than ever before the lurid spectacle of the clash of the various branches of the human

family—the Aryan and the Dravidian, the Mongol and the Semite, who have all been thrown together in the melting pot of humanity, there to remain seething, bubbling, boiling, but never uniting. The dark and the fair, the brown and the yellow races of mankind formed, with the lapse of time, into nations living in different parts of the world, and when differences among them arose and could not be settled, wars were waged. These were originally fought to tickle the ambition of some king or emperor who wanted to see his kingdom or empire extended before his death, but in latter times for political reasons or economic interests, or for the expansion of commerce or the spreading of industry. So terrible have these wars been that the description by the Victorian poet of "Nature red in tooth and claw" might well be applied not only to the world of animals but also to the world of men. It is no wonder that Emerson characterised all history as "old chronology of selfishness and pride," and observed, "We think our civilisation near its meridian, but we are as yet only at the cock-crowing and the morning star."

Even colonisation, the outcome of the so-called healthy spirit of expansion, is but slow battle, more subtle and therefore less perceptible. By force and by desire for trade and loot, the colonisers have imposed their will upon the weak. Rightly did George Peele say, "European history and homicide are indistinguishable." As aptly remarked by Van Loon, the historian, "A human being with the mind of a sixteenth century tradesman driving a 1921 Rolls-Royce is still a human being with the mind of a sixteenth century tradesman."

II

It seems as though the enmity between man and man cannot end with the severe outbursts of violence during wars or the blows of silent death dealt by colonisers on innocent men and women. For there is a conflict of cultures and civilisations as well. It has been brought about by a lack of sympathetic understanding of their differences caused by ages of distinctive growth and development and their variations in outlook and philosophy of life. It is therefore inevitable like wars of the nations. Even what is known as the colour problem,—the struggle between the white and the non-white races of mankind—is resolvable partly to the conflict of cultures. The collective mind of a people moving along distinctive lines of thought and traditions, marked off by its characteristic culture and civilisation, revolts against the idea of association and comradeship with men of alien cultures and civilisations. This explains General Smuts remarking to Mahatma Gandhi in some such words as these : We are not afraid of your people, but we are afraid of their culture. When one country captures another, the right to hold the conquered people under subjection alleged by the victor, is cultural superiority. That is why we hear of "the White Man's Burden" of civilising the non-white races of the earth. Such a burden means not only the heartless exploitation of the natural resources of the conquered countries, but also the duty of raising them to the level of the rulers in culture and civilisation,—in mental, moral and spiritual attainments.

It may be asked, " Why do cultures and civilisations clash ? " The

answer is simple. Man is neither able nor willing to recognise that there are cultures and civilisations other than those to which he belongs, and that these have a value and are as good and necessary for others as his own is for himself.

Cultures and civilisations are the expressions of the collective mind of peoples in differing moods and depths. Every nation, every race, has erected its own magnificent edifices of thought, beautified by the bright and beautiful blossoms of the various arts. The great men of all climes and ages in the past, with their intellect sharp like a sword, have cleaved through nature, probed into her secrets, and discovered both the exact and the experimental sciences. They have conquered the domain of psychology and metaphysics. They have dived deep into the innermost recesses of the soul and given out systems of religion and philosophy. They have enriched civilisation by their treatises on law and polity. They have expressed the joy of life not only in the melody of music, but also in the rhythm of colour. They have wrought poetry not only in prose and verse, but also in silver and gold, in marble and tapestry, in the language of the soul crying for God and its rhapsodies.

Man is apt to forget that systems of cultures have developed through centuries and they present a rich variety of types. The Hellenic and Hebraic types, for example, differ in their background,—in their outlook and ideals. The one looks for the joys and pleasures of life ; the other shuns them for the sake of the joys and pleasures of the soul. Every system of religion has built round itself consciously or unconsciously a system of culture and a system of

civilisation which appear like its halo. These have drawn their inspiration from a central religious impulse and have been moulded by one single spiritual idea. In this manner have arisen and grown the Hindu and Buddhist, Christian and Islamic types of cultures. They all have a general religious setting and show a spiritual trend, moving towards a definite goal. The thought-currents in these types have emanated from their respective religions. With the weakening of the central religious impulse, a type of culture and civilisation may be invaded by extraneous elements, which in course of time may tend to change and even definitely alter the type itself. In Europe the Christian culture which grew and developed under the inspiration of the personality of Jesus and the influence of the Church held sway for centuries, but it became impaired by Hellenic thought which began to slowly penetrate and eventually dominate European life. Though Greece is now no more, she speaks through the voice of Modern Europe, and lives through her arts and literature, culture and civilisation. When, however, the original culture of a nation or country has struck its roots deep into the soil, no new culture or civilisation alien in character or contrary in trend can seriously affect it. The history of India in the nineteenth century furnishes an instance to the point. The condition of the country at the time was different from that of Europe during the period of the Renaissance. India was passing through a period of cultural and intellectual decline, during the British conquest. Her people were dazzled for a time by the glamour of Western culture and civilisation. The soul of the indigenous cul-

ture with its traditions, outlook and ideals was being threatened with extinction. But the alien culture could not get a permanent hold on the country, nor destroy the ancient culture : for in the reaction that followed the advent of the alien type, a great cultural and religious revival came, restoring the original vigour and vitality of the national culture.

The forms and setting through which a system of culture expresses itself vary. Such variation is seen more in the arts and poetry which are its typical products. Taking music, for example, we find that the Indian music and the music of Wagner differ so much that the songs of one school have no charm for the followers of the other, but both are expressions of the cultural soul of their respective nations. If the genius of a language is something which inheres in it and does not lend itself to translation, the genius of a culture is still more inexpressible. Variety is the law of nature and the diversity of the several types of cultures and civilisations, is as inexplicable as the diversity of natural life, of fauna and flora. But behind all this natural diversity a grand unity and commonness of purpose is discernable. All great systems of civilisations contribute to the pleasures and amenities of life, and all great cultures conduce to its refinement. The one improves the objective world and makes nature subservient to man who derives both profit and pleasure from a mastery of her secrets ; the other chastens the mind and purifies the soul. They both reflect the yearnings and aspirations of men, their struggles and successes in the march of life.

Culture is like food which we consume not merely for its nutritive

value, but also for its agreeability. A system of culture suits the race that has evolved it more than any other, and the forms of its expressions like poetry, music, and other arts appeal less to other races, if at all. It prepares the environments in which the minds of the men belonging to it are able to grow and blossom with ease and vigour. When a person belonging to one type of culture by birth and tradition is under the environments of another system of culture, he shares the fate of the tree that is transplanted from an alien soil and an alien climate. That is why a foreign system of education and culture like the English system is unsuited to a country like India possessing a highly evolved culture from time immemorial. Genius flowers best on its native soil. Education and culture are an expression of the soul of a nation, its Samskaras and Vasanas, or what Sir John Woodroffe calls the Seed of the Race.

The cultures which have survived are the outcome of centuries of growth and development, and possess a remarkable power of endurance and

vitality. Some systems of ancient culture died like the little threads of water or brooklets that become lost in the soil after years or even centuries. Others became absorbed by more powerful cultures that had great assimilative capacity, like the streams that add to the volume and contents of some mighty river rolling down in their vicinity, of which they become the tributaries. The cultures of today are those which have lived on for ages in the past without losing themselves in the crush of invading hordes or failing to grow by adaptability or assimilation. It is but natural that they exhibit distinctive characteristics of their own, and so long as these are retained, they are bound to survive in the future as well. Interaction between them, however, is bound to exist, especially in the modern era which precludes the possibility of isolation; they may exercise the power to absorb each other, but types of culture and civilisations that have had the inner strength to stand the wear and tear of time cannot be attended with the evil of studied neglect, and much less with the danger of wanton destruction.

SWETASWATARA UPANISHAD

By Swami Thyagiswara

श्वेता देवं सर्वं पाशापहानिः क्षीरिः क्लेशं जन्ममृत्युपहाणिः ।
तस्याभिष्यामातृतीयं देहभेदे विश्वेष्ये केवल आपकामः ॥

श्वेता - knowing देवं - God सर्वपाशापहानि - the falling away of all fetters क्षीरिः - waning क्लेशः - by misery resulting from ignorance, etc., जन्ममृत्युपहाणिः - cessation of birth and death तस्य - His अभिष्यामात् - by meditation तृतीय - third state देहभेदे - getting beyond the consciousness of the body विश्वेष्ये = universal lordship केवल - one without a second आपकामः - whose desires are satisfied.

With the knowledge God, all setters fall off. With the wanting of ignorance birth and death cease. Going beyond the consciousness of the body by meditation on Him, one reaches the third state, viz., the universal lordship. All his desires are satisfied and he becomes one without a second. (11)

Note : The verse describes the various stages of realisation. The first line refers to the first stage when ignorance vanishes. 'Fetters' (पङ्ग) refers to the limitations of intellectual perception and worldly enjoyments. The second line refers to the escape from the effect of Karma, namely, re-incarnation क्लेश (Klesha) is a technical term meaning (अविद्या) or ignorance and its manifestations. Cf. Patanjali's Sutra (अविद्यास्मितामांद्रषाभिनिवेदयःक्लेशः) The third line refers to how, by continuous meditation on God, one gets beyond the body consciousness which had till then kept him separate from the rest of the world. The last line refers to his becoming one with the ultimate principle.

एतत्तेयं नित्यमेष्टमसंस्थं नातः परं विदितव्यं हि किञ्चित् ।
भोक्ता भोग्यं प्रेरितारं च मत्वा सर्वं प्रोक्तं त्रिविधं ब्रह्ममेतत् ॥

एतत् = this नित्यं = eternally आत्मसंस्थं = existing in one's own self एव = only ज्ञेयं = is to be known अतःपरं = beyond this न किञ्चित् = nothing विदितव्यं = to be known हि = indeed मत्वा = as a result of meditation भोक्ता = enjoyer भोग्यं = the enjoyed प्रेरितारं = that which brings about the enjoyment सर्वं = all एतत् = this त्रिविधं = threefold ब्रह्म = Brahman प्रोक्तं = is declared.

This is to be known as eternally existing in one's own self. There is nothing to be known beyond this. As a result of meditation, the enjoyer, the enjoyed and the power which brings about the enjoyment all are declared to be three aspects of Brahman. (12)

Note : The state attained by the knower of Brahman which is described in the previous Mantra is natural to one and exists in oneself even before realisation; only one is not conscious of it on account of one's limitations. So meditation should be on the eternal truth existing in one's own self and should not be on anything which is separate from it. The second line refers to the fact that when consciousness of unity is reached, knowledge cannot proceed further, as all science attempts only to find out this unity behind diversity. The next two lines, more or less, repeat the idea mentioned in Mantra 9. The word आत्मा refers to reflection and meditation and प्रोक्तं refers to declarations contained in the Vedas. We are reminded of the fact that the declarations of the Vedas about the unity behind diversity, which the aspirant studies in the Sravana stage of his Sadhana, record nothing but the experiences of the Rishis in Samadhi.

वदेयथा योनिगतस्यमूर्त्तर्वं सृश्यते नैव च लिङ्गनाशः ।
स भूय एवेन्धनयोनिष्ट्रिता स्तद्वोभयदेवेणदेवे ॥

यथा = as योनिगतस्य = latent in its source वाऽः = of fire मूर्त्तिः = the form नश्यते = is not seen = न च = and yet लिङ्गनाशः = destruction of its subtle form सः = he भूयः = again and again इन्धनयोनिष्ट्रितः = capable of being perceived, when that piece of wood is brought into contact with another piece of wood एष = surely वा = similarly तदुभयः = both those ग्रन्थेन = by means of Pranava = देहे = in the body.

Fire is not perceived in its cause, the fire-stick, till it is ignited by percussion. The subtle essence of fire, nevertheless, is not absent in the stick; for fire can be obtained from the source, the fire-stick, by striking again. Like both these states of fire, latent and visible, Atman too, not manifested before, is perceived manifestly in the body through meditation on Pranava. (13)

Note : The verse introduces an illustration to convince, even a layman, of the eternal existence in himself of the glory which he subsequently realises as a result of meditation and Japa. The illustration of producing fire from a piece of dry wood by churning it with another piece of wood was most appealing to the ancients who were in the habit producing fire in this way for their sacrifices. That which manifests as an effect in a gross form must have naturally existed in a subtle form before the manifestation. All the glory of the Atman which one realises as a result of meditation must have been existing in oneself in a subtle form, although one is not conscious of it before its gross manifestation.

The verse gives through the illustration a subtle suggestion of the symbology of Vedic sacrifice itself. The fire in the sacrifice is representative of the highest spiritual knowledge and the act of Homa which is interpreted as 'देवतोऽशेनद्वय्यत्यग्म'—'giving up of material objects for the sake of Devata,' is representative of self-sacrifice and destruction of Maya. The external ceremony of producing the fire by the churning of the two sticks is representative of the production of this Atmajnana through meditation and Japa.

Fire as a symbol of God and Atman is as old as humanity itself. We find it in the oldest as well as the youngest of all religions. Cf. the famous Christian hymn "Lead kindly light, etc." Several ideas are suggested by the comparison of Atman to Agni. Its innate purity, self-essulence, capacity to destroy ignorance, its natural tendency to rise up, the habit of consuming the very basis of its existence, its natural opposition to the coldness of death, its dependence upon Upadhis for manifestation, etc.,—all these seem to be suggested.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

Vitamin Theory as a proof of God

Dr. George Sperti, Director of Basic Research Laboratory of the University of Cincinnati, declares in an article contributed to the *Newman News*: "I should feel it a privilege and an honour to attempt to prove to any man that science in no way interferes with a belief in a God of supreme intelligence, but on the contrary furnishes most convincing evidence in support of His existence." The argument he advances in support of his contention is the age-old design theory, namely, that the existence of an elaborate plan in the universe naturally points to a supreme intelligence behind it. He says: "Students of science, having studied and observed the almost unbelievably intricate design of nature, begin to perceive that this universe of ours from the infinitesimal unit of matter, the atom, to the complicated galaxies, is so well planned and so well organised that it could not possibly have been made by any force other than that of a Supreme Intelligence."

But a particular scientific illustration that he utilises in this connection is rather novel and interesting. Our readers may be surprised to know that the Professor has enlisted the support of the vitamin theory on the side of the greatest dogma of religion, namely God. He says: "In connection with discoveries in the vitamin work, sunlight, and in particular ultra violet light, was found to have the same beneficial effect as food containing the vitamins. The question of the inter-relation of vitamins and sunlight led to the discovery that the formation of Vitamin D is effected by sunlight. It is an established fact that specific wave-length of light promotes the formation of Vitamins while others destroy them. Radiation energy on leaving the sun contains not only the beneficial wave-lengths but also the harmful ones. Were these wave-lengths to reach the earth,

according to the vast plan on which this system of light in relation to the vitamins is built, not only would the vitamins be destroyed but also many other essentials to life.

"One naturally asks the question: How does it happen that these harmful radiations do not find their way to the earth and destroy all life as we know it! We might guess that the oxygen, nitrogen, and other elements composing the earth's atmosphere would remove or filter out the harmful wave-lengths. However, an investigation into the ability of the elements to absorb the undesirable radiations reveals the fact that the atmosphere close to the surface of the earth has practically no ability to absorb harmful light waves. A more careful investigation reveals the fact that ozone has the quality we have been seeking, namely, that of selecting the correct wave-lengths to an accuracy of a few hundred millionths of an inch. What is the origin of this layer of ozone so helpful to mankind? If we pursue our investigation further we find that a certain portion of the harmful radiations in the sun-spectrum has the ability to convert the oxygen of the air into ozone. We see that the sun contains a certain band of harmful radiations which convert a portion of the oxygen of the air into a perfect filter for the removal of all undesirable radiations, but at the same time this filter has the property of transmitting the precise wave-lengths which are essential to life on earth.

"The minute accuracy and intricacy of the wave-length selection is almost unbelievable. But when one realises how drastic would be the results if this specific wave-length selection should shift in the slightest degree, it is apparent to the thinking man that the cosmos has a Director of more than human intellect whom we know to be an Infinite creator who has laid definite plans for our survival."

We dare say when the point is explained, there is nothing so wonderful in the illustration as it would at first seem. Intelligence and purposiveness are amply evident even in many of those adjustments of nature that are visible to the common man, and if one were therefore prepared to bring the proper outlook on the question, one can arrive at the intelligence behind the universe even without a knowledge of the mysteries governing the conversion of harmful wave-lengths into beneficial ones. But we feel that this particular outlook is the result of one's temperament and innate tendencies, and it is doubtful whether any amount of scientific study can in itself produce it. One endowed with this outlook will no doubt see the glory of God in every bit of knowledge that the investigation of Nature reveals, but in the absence of it the human mind is not likely to arrive at any self-transcending significance behind the revelations of science, however, astonishing they might be.

A Symbol of Indian Culture

It is often said, and with a good deal of justification, that women are the conservers of the higher values of a civilisation. From the point of view of dress, this statement receives ample support with reference to the culture of our own land. It is a well-known fact that Indian men, when they go abroad, invariably put on European dress. Even in India many of them go about dressed like Europeans. In contrast to this it is practically impossible to see any Indian woman, whether in India or abroad, who abandons her national costume, the sari, and adopts the dress of her European sisters. Is this not symbolic of woman's importance in preserving the great traditions of a civilisation? Not only that, the sari or the Indian woman's dress is from the point of beauty, taste and refinement unsurpassed by the similar costumes of any other nation, and this is a fact that has received very wide recognition. This artistic superiority of the sari may be another rea-

son for its survival in the midst of foreign fashions.

It may be interesting to our readers to know some facts about the origin and growth of this beautiful form of dress. We shall therefore give below a brief account of it on the basis of an interesting article appearing in the *Asiatic Review* from the pen of Mrs. Pratya Devi. She points out that in the pre-Aryan civilisation of the Indus Valley women used to wear only a band about the loins, as it can be gathered from some female figures that have been excavated. But when we come to Ajanta paintings (200 B.C.-600 A.D.) we gather from pictures that women had begun wearing two pieces of cloth, the 'rai' for the upper body and the 'mekhala' for the waist. Especially the upper band of cloth was more of an ornament or a decoration than a dress, since it used to be highly decorated with pearls and embroidery, especially in the case of aristocratic ladies. In early Buddhist period the 'Mekhala' or the lower cloth was extending up to the knee, and in the later Buddhist period we

on the authority of foreign travellers that it was fashion to put on a Chundir or upper cloth over the Rai and the Mekhala. Yuan Chwang, the Chinese traveller of the 7th century A.D., describes Indian dress, both male and female, as follows: "The inner clothing and the outward attire of the people have no tailoring; as to colour a fresh white is esteemed and motley is of no account. The men wind a strip of cloth round the waist and up to the arm pit, and leave the right shoulder bare. The woman wear a long robe which covers both shoulders and fall down loose"

Under the influence of more luxurious habits the 'Rai' transformed in the Middle Ages into elaborate bodice with short sleeves. After the Moghal invasion Persian influence set in, and the Mekhala developed into wide transparent skirt, as one can see in Indo-Persian miniatures, revealing the 'Pyjama' which made its first appearance in India during this

period. In other parts of India like Bengal and Orissa, the Mekhala developed no skirt, but became wider and longer and took the shape of a drapery which forms the sari of to-day. The writer opines that the fashion that developed in these parts conquered the rest of India gradually. She also points out that there are at present four or five principle styles of draping the sari—the Parali or Gujarati, the Mahratti, the Bengali, the Nepali and the Madrasi, of which the last, according to her, is the most popular at present in India.

She concludes the essay with the following remark : "The sari has conquered, as we have already said, the whole of India ; it is on its way to conquer Asia and Europe. Its beautiful folds and its classical perfection give it an eternal beauty which will never age, just as the Egyptian garments, the Greek Chlamyde and the European drapery of the Middle Ages that we see in the museums have an unchangeable nobility above all fashions."

A New Smriti for the Age

The *Social Reformer* publishes the report of an interesting lecture on the necessity of a new Smriti for the age, by Mr. S. D. Naikarni, the founder of the Hindu Sabha at Karwar. Relating the circumstances that led him to the idea of issuing a new Smriti, Mr. Naikarni points out how in the course of his own activities for the removal of untouchability, all the quotations in favour of this necessary reform that he could hunt out of existing Smritis have proved useless in satisfying the anti-reformers ; for the latter are experts in twisting the texts out of their plain meanings to suit their own views and in wrestling over innocent particles and wrangling over prepositions and terminations. "This led me to think," continues the speaker, "that I had better put down my own thoughts in the form of precepts and injunctions unequivocally in Sanskrit verses on the subject of untouchability and all other matters in which Hindu Society stood in need of re-

form. So I drew up a draft. But subsequently a doubt assailed me. What would be its use ? But it is written : 'The secret of faith lies in the cave' (प्राणानि वास्तवं गमते) And by 'cave' here is meant, of course, the human heart. But opponents are likely to take the text literally and even to say that the spirit of old Manu, the law-giver, beholding the sorry plight of his progeny in these days, incarnated itself on the shore of the Western Sea and, leaving a new Smriti composed by him in a cave of the Western Ghats near my town for the well-being of his progeny, and died. If this were so, one had tried to push forward the claims of one's Smritified composition with such legends, the questions would still have remained,—first, whether and how far the attempt would succeed in the critical wide-awake age; and second, whether even if the device did succeed, it would be desirable."

We may, however, assure the speaker that the age is not so critical as he considers it to be, and that there will be many in this country for whom the concocted story of Manu will be a much greater credential of the genuineness of his contemplated Smriti than the democratic procedure he describes subsequently. For he continues : "So I decided that if at all a new Smriti should see the light of day in these democratic times, it should make its appearance only by ways familiar to democracy. So I decided that copies of the draft Smriti with a comprehensive questionnaire should be circulated to men and women of light and leading throughout the Hindu world, in order to elicit their suggestions and opinions and that these should be placed before a Committee to be elected by those leaders for the purpose of settling the final form of the draft. As soon as the draft is settled, it should be put into Sanskrit verses and also rendered into all the vernaculars and into English also and published simultaneously in all these languages with the impre-

matur of Hindu leaders of different castes and creeds and drawn from all provinces." He also proposes that suitable texts from the old Smritis should be culled out and attached to the new one as an Old Testament.

We must remark in this connection that more than all the democratic procedure contemplated by Mr. Nadkarni, the suggestion that the new Smriti should be put into Sanskrit verse is likely to further the object he has in view; for in this country a verse in Sanskrit still carries more weight than cart-loads of common sense and reasoning. In spite of the

force that the Smriti may receive from its Sanskrit garb, it is, however, doubtful whether it will gain the recognition, in part or in entirety, of the so-called Sanatanists of India for the reason that there is no Vyasa, Yagnyavalkya or Parasara to put his imprimatur to this document; for no modern man, however great, can take this place according to this school of thought. But in spite of this deficiency the formulation of the modern views on these questions in the accepted form is a great desideratum, and is likely to have much influence in course of time.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

TEACHINGS FROM THE BHAGAVAD GITA : (with Translation, Introduction and Comments). By Hari Prasad Sastri, D. Litt. Published by Luzac & Co., 46, Great Russell Street, London, W.C. 1. Price 2 shillings.

The book under review is a worthy addition to the numerous translations of the great Hindu Scripture. Unlike many translations of its kind Prof. Sastri's rendering is faithful both to the original and to English idiom. The translator has pruned away those few passages of the Bhagavad Gita that are of local or temporary interest, and thus places before the reader the main body of the Gita teachings with its spiritual beauty and fervour for the most part intact. He has also added supplementary words and remarks so as to make the meaning clear and unambiguous. The style too is simple, forciful and idiomatic. While remaining true to the spirit of the original, it is at the same time free from the defect of literalism which vitiates many translations, rendering them almost un-understandable without consulting the original. "To know the Gita is to know all that is best in the philosophical teachings of India, China and Japan"—remarks Mr. Sastri in his introduction. By this excellent translation of the Gita, the author has opened the

way for this understanding to non-Indians who do not know Sanskrit.

CALLING BACK THE SOUL : By Philip Robinson. Rider & Co., Paternoster House, Paternoster Row, London, E.C. 4.

The thoughts in verse and prose contained in this booklet of 63 pages are the experiences of a mystic. The ideas are those common to mystics of all lands, and the beauty of the ideas will appeal to all, whether Eastern or Western, whose desire is to love perfectly and by love to become one with love.

THE GITA IDEAL OR DEVOTION : (with Translation and Notes on Chapter XII of the Gita). By Diwan Bahadur K. S. Ramaswami Sastri. Pp. 58. Price 4 annas.

SANDILYA BHAKTI SUTRAS : (with Translation and Notes). By the same author. Pp. 24. Price 4 annas.

FUTURE OF THE BRAHMIN. By the same author. Pp. 18. Price 2 annas.

MANU, THE FRIEND OF MAN : By the same author. Pp. 78. Price 8 annas.

In the first two of these booklets, the chief features of the Path of Devotion, *Bhakti Marga*, are clearly and tersely set out. The Gita is the main basis on which Sastriar and Sandilya proceed. Sastriar's notes are brief and

opposite. Devotion appeals to all classes ; and Sastriar's forcible presentation of his subject and the low price will probably introduce Sandilya to many and deepen their devotion.

The third book comprises the presidential address at the last Tanjore District Brahmin Conference on 30-12-1934. Sastriar tries herein to stir up Brahmins to improve themselves and return to their old leadership in religion, social organisation and education, and has offered some practical suggestions to them for adapting themselves to modern conditions, science and culture without losing their individuality and their national ideals.

The fourth book deals with the laws of Manu. Manu's Code of Hindu manners, customs and laws is world famous ; and a selection of its best and most characteristic portions with an English translation needs no apology, explanation or commendation. There is, however, a special reason for this publication. Latterly, in Southern India, communal wrangles have taken an unfortunate turn. In decrying Brahmins and Brahminism of the present day, an attempt has been made, in some quarters, to attack the entire edifice of Hinduism together with its time-honoured foundations, the Vedas, Manu's Code, etc. Sastriar therefore tries, in these selections, to show that many things of great worth in Hinduism are described and ordained in and founded on Manu, and that persons who are anxious to maintain and improve India's material and spiritual welfare will do well to mark, read, digest and act on these passages, instead of blindly attacking anything and everything in that code. Sastriar admits that various parts of it are obsolete and unsuited to present day conditions, but hopes that wise conservative reformers would come forward with their reforms to ensure progress without destroying either our national characteristics or the valuable

achievements of the past. Sastriar's opportune publication is fairly cheap and will be appreciated by the unprejudiced public.

All the above books are by Dewan Bahadur K. S. Ramaswami Sastri and can be had of the Author or at 47, Swami Naick Street, Chintadripet, Madras.

SONGS OF MIRABAI : Translated by R. C. Tandan, Hindu Mandir, Allahabad. Pp. 72. Price Re. 1.

Mirabai is a name to conjure with. No *bhajana* party nor *Bhajanarali*, in Northern India, is complete without some of her heart-entrancing and soul-thrilling Hindi songs. Those who know that language will care little for an English translation which can never thrill and charm like the original. But those who are not so fortunate might get some idea of the soul of that devotee-singer through this book, wherein Mr. Tandan has rendered fifty of her songs into good English prose.

ISA, KENA, KATHA, PRASNA, AND MUNDAKA UPANISHADS (HINDI) : Published by Gita Press, Gorakhpore. Price 3, 8, 9, 7 and 7 annas respectively.

The Gita Press of Gorakhpore is rendering signal service to the Hindi-knowing public by bringing out cheap and beautiful editions of important Sanskrit scriptures with translation. In the present edition of the Upanishads, comprising the above-mentioned Upanishads with Sankara's commentary, the original of the *Bhashya* is divided into paragraphs under proper headings and printed face to face with the Hindi rendering in parallel columns, reminding us of Lobe's Classics. The translation is direct, accurate and clear. The translator has added a few foot-notes which will surely help the ordinary reader. The coloured plates, and the excellence of the printing and the get-up make these volumes all the more attractive.

THE

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VEDANTA KESARI



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SRI SATHYA KRISHNA MATH

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FEBRUARY & MARCH, 1936.

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Sri Ramakrishna Deva

The painting by Frank Dorak



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Let me tell you, strength is what we want, and the first step in getting strength is to uphold the Upanishads and believe that "I am the Atman."
—Swami Vivekananda

THE VEDANTA KESARI

(SRI RAMAKRISHNA CENTENARY NUMBER)

VOL. XXII]

FEBRUARY & MARCH 1936

[Nos. 10 & 11]

TO THE INFANT RAMAKRISHNA

By Girish Chandra Ghosh

(Translated by Mrs. Elizabeth Davidson)

In the arm of a poor Brahmin woman reposing.

Who art Thou that liest shedding light on the earth ?

Who art Thou, so naked, to the poor hut descending ?

O darling, who art Thou that hast taken birth ?

Seeing man thus afflicted with sorrow and suffering

Hast Thou come, priceless jewel, with compassion for all ?

To the heavily-laden Thyself Thou revealest,

Unknown hast Thou come here to answer their call.

Thy face is aglow with celestial kindness ;

For whose sake Thy laughter, for whom Thy tears start ?

Thy dazzling beauty enthrallcth and binds us —

O remoyer of sorrow, let me hold Thee to my heart !

HEAR YE, DEVOTEES OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA! 362

By Swami Vivekananda

[The following is an inspired writing of Swami Vivekananda, that has not been published till now. It speaks of the glory of spiritual realisation, and is therefore most appropriate to the occasion of the Master's Birth-Centenary; for Sri Ramakrishna lived for the one idea that religion consists in realisation of God and not in propounding dogmas and theories.]

IT is only just that I should try to give you a little of my views. I fully believe that there are periodic fermentations of religion in human society, and that such a period is now sweeping over the educated world. While each ferment, moreover, appears broken into various little bubbles, these are all eventually similar, showing the cause or causes behind them to be the same. That religious ferment which at present is everyday gaining a greater hold over thinking men, has this characteristic that all the little thought-whirlpools into which it has broken itself, tend in one single direction—a vision and a search after the Unity of Being. On planes physical, ethical, and spiritual, an ever-broadening generalisation, leading up to a concept of Unity Eternal—is in the air; and this being so, all the movements of the time may be taken to represent, knowingly or unknowingly, the noblest philosophy of unity that man ever had—the Advaita Vedanta.

Again, it has always been observed that as a result of the struggles of the various fragments of thought in a given epoch, one bubble survives. The rest only arise to melt into it, and form a single great wave, which sweeps over society with irresistible force.

In India, America, and England (the countries I happen to know

about) hundreds of these are struggling at the present moment. In India, dualistic formulæ are already on the wane, the Advaitists alone hold the field in force. In America, many movements are struggling for the mastery. All these represent Advaita thought more or less, and that series which is spreading most rapidly approaches nearer to it than any of the others. Now if anything was ever clear to me, it is that one of these must survive, swallowing up all the rest, to be the power of the future. Which is it to be?

Referring to history, we see that only that fragment which is fit will survive, and what makes one fit to survive but character? Advaita will be the future religion of thinking humanity. No doubt of that. And of all the sects, they alone shall gain the day, that are able to show highest character in their lives.

Let me tell you a little personal experience. When my Master left the body, we were a dozen penniless and unknown young men. Against us were a hundred powerful organisations, struggling hard to nip us in the bud. But Ramakrishna had given us one great gift, the desire and the life-long struggle not to talk alone, but to live the life. And to-day all India knows and reverences the Master, and the truths he taught are spreading like wild fire. Ten years ago, I could



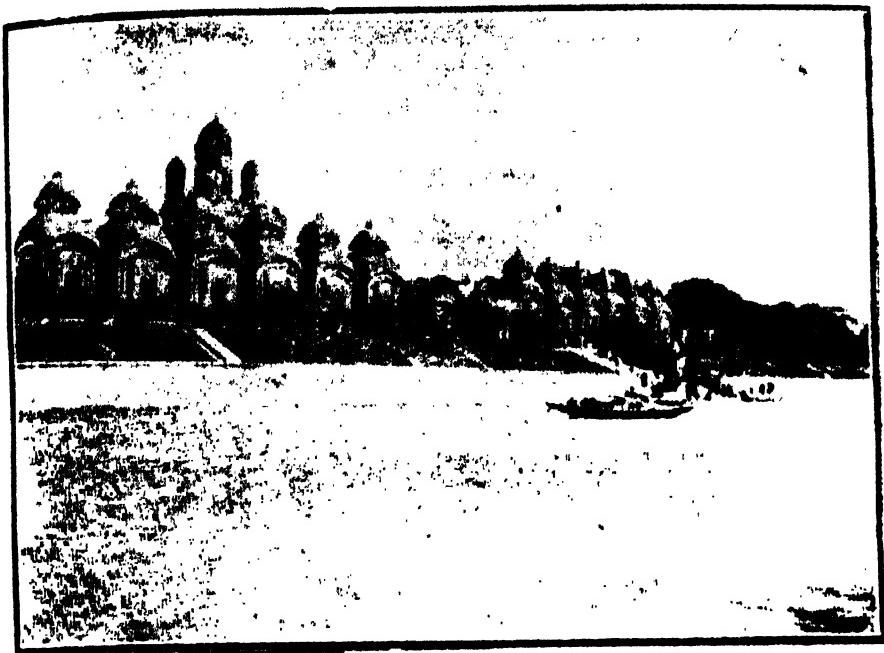
Sri Ramakrishna



Swami Vivekananda



The Panchavati
(The place where Sri Ramakrishna performed his Sadhanas)



Dakshineswar temple as viewed from the Ganges



not get a hundred persons together to celebrate his birth-day anniversary. Last year there were fifty thousand.

Neither numbers, nor powers, nor wealth, nor learning, nor eloquence, nor anything else will prevail but *purity, living the life*, in one word, Anubhuti, realisation. Let there be but a dozen such lion-souls in each country, lions who have broken their own bonds, who have touched the Infinite, whose whole soul is gone to Brahman, who care neither for wealth nor power nor fame, and these will be enough to shake the world.

Here lies the secret. Says Patanjali, the father of Yoga: "When a man rejects all the superhuman powers, then he attains to the 'cloud of virtue'." He sees God. He becomes God, and helps others to become the same. This is all I have to preach. Doctrines have been expounded enough. There are books by the million. Oh, for an ounce of practice!

As to societies and organisations, these will come of themselves. Can there be jealousy where there is nothing to be jealous of? The names of those who will wish to injure us will be legion. But is not that the surest sign of our having the truth? The more I have been opposed, the more my energy has always found expression. I have been driven away without a morsel of bread: I have been feasted and worshipped by princes. I have been slandered by priests and laymen alike. But what of it? Bless them all! They are my very self. And have they not helped

me by acting as a spring-board from which my energy could take higher and higher flights?

I have discovered one great secret—I have nothing to fear from *talkers* of religion. And the great ones who realise—they become enemies to none. Let talkers talk. They know no better! Let them have their fill of name and fame and money and woman. Hold we on to realisation, to being Brahman, to becoming Brahman. Let us hold on to truth unto death, and from life to life. Let us not pay the least attention to what others say, and if, after a lifetime's effort, one, only one, soul can break the fetters of the world and be free, WE HAVE DONE OUR WORK. Hari Om!

One word more. Doubtless I do love India. But everyday my sight grows clearer. What is India, or England, or America to us? We are the servants of that God who by the ignorant is called MAN. He who pours water at the root, does he not water the whole tree?

There is but one basis of well-being, social, political, or spiritual—to know that I and my brother are one. This is true for all countries and all people. And Westerners, let me say, will realise it more quickly than Orientals who have almost exhausted themselves in formulating the idea and producing a few cases of individual realisation.

Let us work without desire for name or fame or to rule over others. Let us be free from the triple bonds of lust, greed of gain and anger. And the truth is with us.

REFLECTIONS ON SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S 364 BIRTH-CENTENARY

THIS month, a century ago was born in an obscure corner of Bengal a soul enlivened by the touch of the Holy Spirit, who has come to be known as Sri Ramakrishna by the world at large. Unknown to name and fame, unconnected with political and social upheavals of his days, he lived for fifty years in our midst, spending his time in quiet contemplation and unostentatious service. He courted obscurity, and shunned publicity and self-assertion; yet the subtle dynamism of the spirit enshrined in him was such that like the gentle dew which though unseen and silent in its working yet brings the fairest blossoms to the light of day, his advent inaugurated a new era in the spiritual history of mankind through the efforts of a band of young men headed by Swami Vivekananda, whose lives were transformed by his divine touch. "The full-blown lotus never goes in search of honey-sucking bees," he has remarked with reference to the spiritual men, "they come attracted by its beauty and fragrance". So has it been with him. The sweet aroma and the divine halo of his transfigured personality combined with the artless wisdom and spiritual power of his words have attracted to him men of all stages of life and culture—boys in their teens as well as men in the evening of their life, unsophisticated village women as well as learned savants, penurious workmen as well as rich aristocrats.

In the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna were embodied the

universal principles of religion and spiritual life which mankind is in sore need at the present time. He has demonstrated in his life that soul and God are not mere objects of speculation or idle fancy but facts that can be felt and realised in a more convincing way than the ordinary experiences of the world. In his life of perpetual God-consciousness is the remedy for the gloom of scepticism that envelops the modern world. In his realisation of the fundamental unity of all religions and the underlying Divinity of all men is the solution of the religious antagonism, and the racial and national animosities that threaten the well-being of human society at the present time. In his doctrine of worship of God through the service of all is the reconciliation of the conflicts between religion and secularism characteristic of the modern age.

By a life of perfect love, purity and catholicity, by the harmonious cultivation of Jnana (wisdom), Bhakti (love), and Karma (action), and by an unprecedented ardour in the practice of renunciation and spiritual disciplines he has placed before us an example of holiness and God-realisation that transcends all limitations of time and nationality.

On the auspicious occasion of the Birth-Centenary of this God-man, let us raise our hearts in prayer to the Supreme Spirit that was embodied as our Great Master, invoking Him to shower the blessings of wisdom, love and peace on all men. In his own life-time Sri Ramakrishna sometimes used to stand on the top of the

terrace at Dakshineswar and cry out with a longing heart, inviting all who hungered for God and illumination, to come and partake of the rich spiritual repast that he had prepared for all. His is the eternal call of God to Man. Even though he is no more in flesh, he survives in his divine form and with out-stretched hands calls upon the weary and heavy-laden to

seek the haven of rest that his message offers unto them. May the world make this occasion an opportunity for a deeper study of the Master's life and teachings! May the Divine Spirit endow humanity with a new moral earnestness and spiritual ardour—the creation of which was the object of the Master's advent on this planet of ours!

YOUNG BENGAL AND THE ADVENT OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

(THE PRELUDE TO THE IMMORTAL LIFE)

By K. C. Chaudhury, M.A.

[Mr. K. C. Chaudhury occupies a high position in Government Service. He is also an ardent admirer of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda movement. His masterly sketch of the growth of intellectual and religious ferment in Bengal after the establishment of British rule, helps one to understand the life and personality of Sri Ramakrishna in the perspective of history and appreciate his valuable contribution to the making of Modern India. We wish to supplement Mr. Chaudhury's article with the remark that though in other Provinces the religious reaction to modern influences did not take the shape of Brahmoism, the intellectual and religious outlook was more or less the same as in Bengal, and that the personality of Sri Ramakrishna therefore has an identical significance in their case also.]

Meeting of the East and the West such as took place in India at the beginning of the British Rule could not but produce a ferment. The renaissance in modern India is the result of that ferment. The Deccan peninsula where the first European adventurers came could well be the birth place of the renaissance. But, perhaps, because of the fact that the early European adventurers in the Deccan were mere marauders, and the British power was first consolidated in Bengal, the renaissance had its beginnings in Calcutta instead of in the Deccan. Besides, one must recognise that there is always some mystery about the "bursting" of new ideas. While outward events and circumstances may stimulate new

ideas, and a new spirit, it is equally true that it is the new spirit already awakened in man which discovers new meaning in old facts. "In the history of discovery", says Emerson "the ripe and the latent truth seems to have fashioned a brain for itself." The spirit of 'Young Bengal' seems to have fashioned several such brains for its manifestation in the early part of the nineteenth century.

First, we shall trace the course of the intellectual movement. The introduction of English education in Bengal was due to private effort. The citizens of Calcutta wanted their children to learn English in order that they might find favour with the new ruling power. Some Eurasians took advantage of the situation and started

schools for imparting a working knowledge of English. But it is obvious that the learning of English from such purely mercenary motives could never have led to a renaissance. An indomitable spirit of enquiry which is the soul of every renaissance was already abroad. The spirit of renaissance is a force which works from within; it cannot be imposed on a people from without. In the East India Company's charter of 1813 it was stipulated "that a sum of not less than a lac of rupees in each year shall be set apart, and applied to the revival and improvement of literature, and the encouragement of the learned natives of India and for the introduction and promotion of a knowledge of the sciences among the territories of India." Nothing, however, was done till 1823 when a Committee of Public Instruction was set up for deciding as to how the money should be spent. It is noteworthy that the authorities were definitely in favour of encouraging the traditional system of education through the Sanskrit and Arabic Schools. The Calcutta Madrasah had been founded by Warren Hastings in 1781, and a Sanskrit College was founded at Benares in 1792 through the efforts of Jonathan Duncan. The Committee of Public Instruction could think of no better use for the educational grant which had accumulated since 1813 than to spend it on more Sanskrit Colleges in Nuddea and Tirhoot, and on the printing and publication of Sanskrit and Persian manuscripts. But Young Bengal had already made up its mind in favour of the European sciences and philosophy and against the satisfaction to be derived from the knowledge that was imparted in the Sanskrit and

Arabic Schools. On the 20th January, 1817, was founded the Hindu College through the efforts of David Hare, Raja Ram Mohun Roy, Sir Hyde East, and other leading citizens of Calcutta who were inclined towards English education. The money came through spontaneous subscriptions, which showed the eagerness of the people for English education. In 1818 came into existence the School Society for the purpose of establishing new English and Vernacular Schools. Thus, while the Government was vacillating, the people themselves had already made their choice. In his historic letter to Lord Amherst Raja Ram Mohun Roy openly espoused the cause of Western education. It is said that he turned the face of the people from the East to the West. The authorities were not immediately won over; but they sanctioned a grant-in-aid for the Hindu College which became the citadel of the New Learning. The man under whose inspiration the youths were to be fired with the idea of free thinking, and under whose influence they were to deny 'authority' and to recognise nothing but 'reason' in every sphere of life—was appointed a teacher of the Hindu College in 1828. The name of Henry Vivian Derozio must always remain immortal in the history of Young Bengal. Born in a family of Portuguese origin he received his education under a Scotsman named David Drummond who instilled in Young Derozio the ideas of the French Revolution. When in his turn Derozio became a teacher, he succeeded so well in implanting all these ideas on the minds of his pupils that it produced most far-reaching results. In April, 1831, Derozio was removed from the College for the

offence of preaching revolutionary ideas, and he died a premature death in the following December. But in the course of his brief association with the Hindu College he had touched with his magic wand enough number of boys who would bring about a social revolution in Bengal.

The administration of Sir William Bentinck came as a god-send to the partisans of English education. The leading men were divided into two camps at the time. One was called the school of Nayi Roshni, (i.e. New Learning), and the other was called the school of Purani Roshni (Old Learning). David Hare and Raja Mohun Roy with their friends and followers, as well as all the Hindu College men belonged to the Nayi Roshni; but the important officials were all in favour of the Old Roshni. It is said that ever since the example set by Sir William Jones it became almost a fashion for the educated Englishmen in India to learn and admire Sanskrit. The Purani Roshni had amongst its adherents such stalwarts as Colebrooke, Wilson, James, Shakespeare, and the Prinsep brothers. With the advent of Bentinck official patronage which had leaned so long to the Old Roshni changed sides. Hitherto it had been thought that the East India Company's educational grant could be spent only for the purpose of reviving and encouraging "native", i.e., the indigenous system of learning. But Macaulay the Law Member of Bentinck's Council gave it as his opinion that there was no legal bar to the grant being spent on the teaching of European arts and sciences. In March 1835 Lord Bentinck declared that the Government grant would thenceforward be spent on the teach-

ing of European sciences and arts through the medium of English. Macaulay's Minute is a historic document. His sneers about Arabic and Sanskrit literature, his hyperboles, and invectives could not fail to exasperate the men of the Old Roshni School. As a protest against Macaulay's remarks and the new policy of the Government, Shakespeare and Prinsep resigned from the Committee of Public Instruction. But Lord Bentinck was not to be daunted; he appointed Macaulay to be the new President of the Committee. The Hindu College men all ranged themselves on the side of Bentinck whose administration also saw the abolition of the Suttee and the establishment of the Medical College at Calcutta. Under the patronage of Bentinck 'Young Bengal' saw the complete triumph of its ideals. But what was that ideal?

The ideal of "Young Bengal" was only a destructive iconoclasm for every social and religious institution of India—a contempt for everything 'oriental.' The historian of the Renaissance in Bengal writes: "From the day on which Macaulay declared that 'a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia—Kalidas yielded place to Shakespeare in the estimation of Young Bengal, Edgeworth's Tales took the place of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, and the Bible easily replaced the Vedas, the Vedanta, and the Gita. Young Bengal had three gurus, namely, David Hare, Derozio, and Macaulay. All the three taught one and the same lesson—namely that everything oriental is bad and everything occidental is good." The representative man of

Young Bengal was Michael Madhusudan Dutt who is said to have been wayward as a son, wayward as a father, wayward as a husband, wayward as a poet—in fact, wayward in every respect.

So much for the intellectual movement. We now proceed to examine its religious and social repurcussions. Amongst a people essentially religious in their ideas there could never be a purely intellectual movement. Just as the Italian renaissance was transformed into the Reformation as soon as it reached the Teutonic world, so the renaissance amongst the Hindus automatically and immediately gave rise to a movement of religious reformation. The impact of Christianity helped the process. The reformation took the form of Brahmoism, i.e., Unitarianism. The first reformer was Raja Ram Mohan Roy whose mind had become liberalised even early in life by a comparative study of Islamie, Buddhistic, and Hindu Theology. Later in life he studied Christian theology from the Greek and Hebrew texts as well. He inveighed against Hindu idolatry and against Trinitarian Christianity. He preached Unitarianism taking his stand not only on reason but also on the texts of Hindu philosophical literature. He was an ardent supporter of English education and of social reform movement. In 1815 he founded the Atmiya Samaj wherein he preached and discussed his ideas. In 1828 he founded the Brahmo Samaj; but when he went to England in 1830 the Samaj ceased to flourish. Meanwhile the Christian missionaries who had received permission to preach within British India launched a

vigorous attack on Hinduism.* Their ambition was no less than to convert the whole population into the Christian faith. At first their efforts at conversion did not meet with any success amongst the upper classes; but in the thirties the famous missionary Alexander Duff succeeded in converting some "educated" Hindus. The news of the conversion of a few "Hindu College" men greatly agitated the minds of the people, and there was raised the cry of 'Hinduism in danger.' But unless there were some form of Hinduism which could appeal to the *reason* of the English-educated people, and which could appear to them as free from all superstitions—nothing could stem the tide of wholesale conversion. Brahmoism supplied that need and saved Hindu Society at this hour of crisis. In 1838 Devendranath Tagore, the father of Rabindranath Tagore, founded the Tatwabodhini Sabha for preaching the Upanishads which declare the oneness of God. In 1843 Devendranath Tagore openly embraced Brahmoism. By his saintly character and the moderation of his views, Devendranath Tagore commanded universal respect, and he succeeded in reviving Brahmoism

*The East India Company was not kind towards the Christian missionaries at the beginning. Their solicitude for the retention of the territories which fortune shook into their lap made them scrupulously respect the prejudices and religious observances of the native population. The authorities were always apprehensive that the Christian missionaries might ruin the prospects of an empire by exasperating the people through imprudent attacks on Hinduism and Islam. The earliest organised attempt for the preaching of Christianity was made from Serampore, which was a Danish possession at the time.

from its moribund condition. Many of the "Hindu College" men became Brahmos besides others who possessed great genius and intellectual powers. The movement gained strength from day today, and Brahmoism also became identified with all social reform movements. Devendranath Tagore and his followers also tried to give reasoned reply to the criticism of Hinduism by the Christian missionaries. Raja Ram Mohun Roy had done the same thing. There were attacks and counter-attacks. The two parties tried to discover and hold up to ridicule the weak points of each other; but it must be admitted that whereas the Christian missionaries were guided almost exclusively by the desire to villify Hinduism, Ram Mohun Roy, Devendranath Tagore, and most of their followers were genuinely anxious to learn and appreciate the truth in Christianity. The light was also turned inwards. One of the main subjects of discussion was the revealed character of the Vedas. Babu Akshayakumar Datta, a stalwart of the Brahmo Samaj, declared that the Brahmos could not accept any literary composition as "revealed." Devendranath Tagore was also won over to this idea. This development of the Brahmo faith is noteworthy inasmuch as the most radical philosopher who called himself a Hindu had never before impugned the Vedas.

In the fifties there came to the Brahmo Samaj a man who by genius, enthusiasm, and oratorical powers was a born leader of the people. Keshab Chandra Sen joined the Brahmo Samaj about the year 1860, and under his leadership Brahmoism reached the high watermark. From many a platform Keshab addressed

and exhorted the young and the old, women and children, and wherever he went the educated men flocked around him. Keshab was not a cold theologian, he was not a mere deist or unitarian—he was essentially a preacher of the Bhakti cult. His leaning was towards eclecticism. At one time he imbibed so much the ideas of the sin of man and the need for repentance that he could easily be taken for a devout Christian. All these years the Brahmos had pressed forward with various social reform programmes till they began to advocate inter-caste marriage. This at once brought about a crisis. The legality of such marriages was questioned. Legal opinion was that even marriages within the same caste performed according to Brahmo rites were invalid in the eye of law. The Government introduced a bill called the "Native Marriage Bill" to regularise the position; the title was subsequently changed to "the Civil Marriage Bill." But the new law was to be applicable only to such people as would declare themselves to be not belonging to Hinduism or to any other recognised religion. Devendranath Tagore, Rajnarain Bose and some other leaders refused to accept this position;—they emphatically declared that the Brahmos were Hindus. But Keshab Chandra Sen accepted the provisions of the new Bill. This produced a schism within the Brahmo Samaj. Devendranath Tagore, Rajnarain Bose and others called their Samaj the Adi Brahmo Samaj whereas the liberal Brahmos who had broken with Hinduism founded the Bharatbarshiya Brahmo Samaj, and set to work with a new zeal. They sent preachers to other provinces and succeeded in establish-



ing centres even in far-off Sind, Bombay, and Madras. Later on there was disagreement again between Keshab and some of his followers. Keshab founded the Navavidhan or New Dispensation Samaj whereas the latter founded the Sadgatan (Democratic) Brahmo Samaj.

Brahmoism really fell from its pedestal in 1871 when the majority of Brahmos under Keshab's leadership declared themselves to be non-Hindus. A new spirit of nationalism—a new pride in the religious and social institutions of the land was gradually rising within the minds of the people as a reaction against excessive Westernisation. This new spirit was finding expression in literature and antiquarian research. The declared break with Hinduism at such a time was fatal to the popularity of Brahmoism. In defence of the Adi Brahmos Rajnarain Bose delivered in 1871 his famous and historic lectures on the "Superiority of Hindu Religion." It is said that from that year Young Bengal turned its back on Brahmoism.

But to win over Young Bengal to the ancient spiritual ideal of Hinduism it was not enough to make an intellectual dissertation on its supe-

riority over other forms of religion. Hinduism is an elusive thing, it cannot be defined, it comprises all varieties and gradations of faith. Brahmoism is an eclectic religion whose founders tried to select the best from every religion, and combine it in Brahmoism. Such eclecticism is surely not Hinduism. There was need for some one to illustrate what Hinduism is—how the apparently divergent forms of it can be reconciled one with another, what its relation to other religions is, how in spite of its divergent and everchanging forms it has retained its unity from age to age as the Sanatan Dharma, and has satisfied the cravings of the most intellectual minds. The Immortal in mortal frame who was to reconcile all apparent divergencies, who was to solve all puzzles, who was to wed the new to the old—was quietly doing his *Sadhana* at Dakshineshwar. When at last he spoke, his language was equally intelligible to the simple villager as well as to the refined citizen, to the illiterate as well as to the most learned, to the Sanskritist as well as to the 'Englishmen.' The gathering of Keshab and Naren to his feet was symbolic of the conversion of Young Bengal to the ancient faith of the land.

* A BIOGRAPHICAL OUTLINE

By Swami Tapasyananda

[The following very brief outline of Sri Ramakrishna's life is meant to help the reader, who has not read his detailed biography, to form some idea of the general trend of his life.]

STUDGED from the external point of view the life and personality of Sri Ramakrishna had nothing in them to impress his contemporaries. He was not gifted with the power of

oratory or the capacity to write epoch-making books, to lead political movements or to work out schemes of social welfare and industrial organisation. Unimposing in appearance,

uneducated in the lore of either the East or the West, possessing the favours of neither fortune nor power, he was for all outward appearance nothing more than one among the countless Hindu devotees who spend their quiet and uneventful life in the sacred precincts of a temple of God.

His life is in fact bereft of striking events as that of any other of this class. Born of a pious Brahmin family on the 18th of February, 1836, he spent the early part of his life till the age of seventeen in his village home at Kamarpukur, helping in the household duties, doing the family worship, enacting village dramas, organising groups of boys, outraging the superstitious susceptibilities of the old village folk—engaged in fact in just those occupations which one may naturally expect of an intelligent, spirited and well-behaved village boy. Being absolutely negligent of his studies, Gadadhar, as he was then called, was taken to Calcutta for education at the age of seventeen by his brother Ramkumar, himself the head of a school of Sanskrit learning in that city. His utter disgust for secular education, because of its purely utilitarian objectives, stood in the way of his making any progress in that direction even under the more favourable environment which life in Calcutta offered. Shortly after the opening of the Kali temple at Dakshineswar, on the 31st of May, 1855, he was appointed a priest there, at first to assist his brother Ramkumar who was the chief priest in the temple, and a little later to officiate as the chief priest in place of his brother.

Then came a revolution in his character. A divine madness seized

him, and he spent many years in an apparently unbalanced state of mind, panting for God and practising various forms of spiritual disciplines under the guidance of adepts in them. After a period of nearly twelve years spent in strenuous spiritual strivings, his mind emerged from those tempestuous regions of the spiritual realm in which it had been caught for many years. But then he appeared before men with his whole being transformed—his ignorance replaced by illumination, his doubts dispelled by the certainty of God-realisation, and his unimposing personality vitalised by the fervour of a strange and fiery faith. Thenceforth he spent his time in divine communion and spiritual ministration, in the experience of passionate God-love and Samadhi followed by illuminating conversations on topics divine for the benefit of people who gathered round him for spiritual inspiration. After more than a decade of active spiritual service unto men, he fell ill of cancer in the throat. Then followed a year of intense physical suffering and very active spiritual service for the benefit of earnest enquirers, until the physical frame, unable to bear the strain any more, broke down, and he passed into Maha Samadhi on Sunday, the 15th of August 1886.

This is the bare skeleton of his life, and it will be seen that there is no wealth of events and striking achievements in it that we are generally accustomed to associate with great men. Especially the age in which he lived was noted for the many celebrities it produced in the field of religion and social reform. There lived a few years before him, the great Ram Mohun, hailed as the morning star of Indian Renaissance,

a master of several languages, an heir to the best cultures of both the East and the West, a patriot, social reformer and spiritual leader in one, whose virile thought could grasp within its sweep every national and social problem confronting his country. And among his contemporaries there was the famous Maharshi Devendranath Tagore, a prototype of the ancient Rajarshis, before whose aristocratic dignity and mature wisdom, an uneducated, frail plebeian like Ramakrishna must pale as a star before the moon. Again, among his own intimate friends and admirers there was Keshub Chandra Sen, the renowned Brahmo leader and Bhakta, whose soul-stirring eloquence and majestic power of personality thrilled both the East and the West, and made him the idol of the Indian youth of his times. It is pertinent to ask, how, surrounded by a galaxy of such great men, Ramakrishna, the humble priest of Kali, whose education did not go beyond the three R's and whose knowledge of men and matters was circumscribed within very narrow limits, could make such tremendous impression on the minds of his countrymen that while his great contemporaries are already, or are in the process of becoming, mere memories in the minds of the new generation, his name and personality are growing into a force in the lives of

an ever-increasing circle of men with the progress of time. The secret of this lies in what is described in ordinary parlance as God-realisation, that state of mind and personality in which the Deity is no longer a mere name or an intellectual conception but a fact of experience more real and substantial than the common objects of daily life. In his life was reflected, more than in that of any of his contemporaries, India's unquenchable yearning for the Infinite and her triumphant sense of God-realisation. Hence this impetuous and irresistible yearning for God, the mighty upsurgeals of mind that came upon him in its wake, the disciplines that he passed through with remarkable zeal, and the final state of harmony and illumination that dawned on him —these form the main points of interest in the study of his life and personality. If the lives of great politicians, generals and social leaders are full of great efforts and achievements, his life too was so from the spiritual point of view, crowded as it was with striking events, struggles and realisations that will arrest the attention of the historian of man's spiritual strivings. His short life of God-realisation, extending over a span of fifty years, can in brief be described as an epitome of man's spiritual history from the very birth of civilisation.

By Prof. Mahendra Nath Sircar, M.A., Ph.D.

[Dr. Sircar, the well-known philosopher and thinker of Modern India, is the Professor of Philosophy in the Presidency College, Calcutta. He is the author of several valuable books, of which the latest are "Hindu Mysticism" and "Eastern Lights" the first being a study of Upanishadic thought and the second the lectures he delivered recently in European Universities. Prof. Sircar combines in himself vast erudition and a profoundly spiritual outlook. His philosophic method is therefore more intuitive and psychological than merely intellectual. The following penetrating study of Sri Ramakrishna is an excellent example of Prof. Sircar's method and its usefulness in expounding philosophy from the spiritual and mystical point of view.]

THIS month the admiring devotees and followers of Sri Ramakrishna celebrate the centenary of their great master in order to commemorate the occasion when the Holy Spirit descended upon earth to create a new cycle of expression in wisdom and faith. To understand Sri Ramakrishna is really to appreciate and to envisage the functioning of the Holy Spirit in earth consciousness; for in the light of Spirit the subtle connection between Earth and Heaven always lasts, and at times the divine influence is scattered through the chosen instrument of God. Ramakrishna was such an instrument. To understand Ramakrishna requires spiritual sympathy, without which intellect may repeat formulas but cannot enter into the deeper implications of spiritual life.

Intellect may understand the eternal truths of religions dispassionately; the understanding of them helps their intimate and intuitive realisation. But intuitive understanding is not enough for spiritual life—it may satisfy the philosophic instinct in man; but intellect is internally incapable of completely comprehending the dynamics of spiritual life. Spiritual life is not only a philosophic comprehension, an opening in thought,

with its new perspectives in some relational forms, but is essentially the vivid realisation of the formative spirit that is expressed through the graded universes and existences, filling all with life, sentience, movement, joy, beauty, harmony, and at the same time transcending them in its supreme Puissance and Plenitude of Being.

The true spiritual realisation has been, therefore, distinct from philosophic comprehension. Philosophic comprehension gives silent intuition the dignity of existence, and finally gives that intuition (intellectual) which appraises Reality *sub specie aeternitatis*. This is, indeed, the finest philosophic realisation which transcends the consciousness of modes and forms of existence and enters into the world of Transcendence. Such has been the philosophic inspiration and philosophic realisation.

In mystical life, this ascent is supposed to be the beginning of the life divine; for the divine movement in life cannot be appreciated unless the foundation of life is understood to be divine. Philosophy generally lays stress on the realisation of the summit of being, but philosophy cannot further trace the finer movement of Spirit in life unless our inner being is responsive

to the finest currents of Spirit through the movement of life. In spiritual life the fuller expression emerges when the dynamism of life is conceived to be the dynamism of Spirit. And to the ordinary philosophic insight this dynamism of Spirit is not so clear a fact. Philosophy has, therefore, always sought transcendence and the philosophic vision has been satisfied with the *intellectual intuition of the whole* in a rare moment. The super-sensible, beyond the creative expression of Spirit in the sensible world, has been the search of the philosophic mystic.

But this appears to many as a one-sided realisation of spiritual life, which cannot envisage the divine play of Spirit through life. The mystics discover the movement of life not in ignorance, but in delight, and enjoy the flute of Krishna through the eternal dance of life.

They see God in actuality in the creative urges and the creative harmony through which Spirit affirms itself against the obstructions of matter. The mystic is responsive to God in his super-conceptual transcendence or, as Professor Whitehead puts it, to God in His eternal conceptual nature, as well as to God as a creative, redemptive, and remoulding force, in other words to God as actuality. The conflicts in life have often blinded us to this side of the divine consciousness and prevented us from seeing the beauties and dignities of the divine life in the cosmic play. The mystics see the play far better than the scientists or the metaphysicians. The scientists cannot see the divinity of the creative force, the metaphysician sees the formal functioning of it and none can probe into its divine nature and significance. The mystic insight

goes deeper and sees in the movement of life the expression of divine beauty, love and power.

The mystic, therefore, has the vantage ground to understand the divine life in its silence and in its play, and thus envisages the integral existence not only *sub specie aeternitatis*, but also *sub specie diutinudinis*. The movement of life is to be divinised, before life's complete blessings can be understood and enjoyed. Here, the difference arises between the souls that are immersed in the Transcendental beatitude and are cut off from the movement of life, and the souls that can see the play of the Divine through the different layers of existence and at the same time can be consciously aware of the Truth that is beyond all light and darkness. This sympathy with the play of Spirit in life is a consummation that is possible when the psychicisation of our being is established. This alone could impress us with the divine springing of life, without which it is natural to ignore divine life in its cosmic play.

The great creators of thought generally differ at this point from the great founders of religion. The calm intuition confines the vision of the seer to the perception of the Eternal Truths, and even if they are dynamic their dynamism is confined to the expression of Truth and the relations of life in intellectual terms. They lack the force of life. They are the detached observers of the play of forces from which they keep themselves off and do not appreciate their spiritual value and worth. But with the descent of the Holy Spirit in man, he begins to feel the sacredness and divinity of life and sees profound beauty and meaning in the cosmic expression of Spirit and the holiness of life. The Holy

Spirit is an important conception in the spiritual life, for it is practically the flame that burns out the dross from life and reveals its grandeur, sweetness, radiance, beauty. The Holy Ghost is really the spirit of the Divine which takes charge of the aspiring soul and helps to realise its essential divinity and the unfailing unity with the Divine. In Indian Mysticism the indrawing and illuminating influence of the Holy Spirit is a recognised fact, and when one surrenders oneself to the care of the Holy Spirit, the divinisation of his being is assured. The touch of Holy Spirit has the fruitful effect of installing us in the Divine and of bringing down the Divine Spirit on earth. It fills up the creation with divine beauties and adds divine Amour to everything. It is the irradiating centre of the divine currents of power, life and wisdom. Where the Holy Spirit establishes itself fully, there is the direct current of divine life.

In the dynamism of spiritual life the power and the function of the Holy Ghost is evident. And spiritual life cannot completely be understood and its mysteries fathomed, if the direct touch of the Holy Spirit is not felt.

It is difficult to understand Ramakrishna, unless the truth and the potency of the Holy Spirit is realised and its moulding power is understood. The spirit of God descends directly upon man. Naturally men are satisfied with a seeking and a surrender and with an effort at a spiritual discipline which may pass into a spiritual habit touching life as a whole, helping intellectual flowering and unselfish movements. But the most complete spiritual consummation cannot take place unless there is the direct descent and intervention of the Spirit

which can alone make us fit for the finest realisation. This truth is to be fully comprehended before one can understand Ramakrishna.

The Tantricism and the Vaishnavism of the Hindus fully recognise the instrumentality of the Divine Sakti for the full flowering of life. And it is the Divine Mother, Sakti, that moved Ramakrishna from within to realise the dynamism and the silence of Spirit. Ramakrishna was charged with the descent of Spirit, and he had, therefore, many movements in his life. His psychic nature was in direct touch with the Divine Power which could easily give infinite expressions through his being. To characterise Ramakrishna in intellectual terms is to minimise his importance; for intellect may demand a decision regarding the ultimate theory of Reality or life, but life unfolds infinite movements which are not possible for intellect to understand, appraise and evaluate.

Unless the psychic centre in man could be unearthed, and made active, the divinisation of life's movement could not be comprehended. When the psychicisation becomes complete, the direct touch is established with God; and man then moves consciously under the divine impulse. And this makes the ordinary adept so different from the dynamic spiritual characters. The latter do not see and enjoy the perspectives of life from distance. They can feel the divine touch and the control of life in its every movement. Such types of men become wonderfully introverted, because their inwardness in self and their outdrawnness in active life are both the movements of divine life.

Ramakrishna was intensely active in radiating spiritual influence, because the spirit of God never left

him, and his influence and inspiration was so powerful because he drew them from the Divine Force. He was possessed by the spirit of Maha Kali which made him so vigilant about the movements of truer nature in man, which helped transformation of his being to make it a fit vehicle of expression for the Divine. His command over details of life and his spirit of creativeness showed the functioning of Maha Saraswati in Him. His surrender, the exquisite aroma of peace and harmony that he used to scatter showed that Maha Laxmi was equally active in him. In fact in the finest flowering of spiritual life these forces become spontaneously active, for they begin to function when the psychic nature in man opens itself up to the Divine.

Ramakrishna as a centre of dynamical spirituality was active, for the richness of spiritual life unfolds in the dynamic currents of the soul when one can enjoy the direct divine touch and move in the divine awakening of life. It is easy to reach transcendence in the process of ascent, but it is infinitely more difficult to saturate one's being with divine energy and make oneself the divine instrument on earth.

Every man in some way is the divine instrument, but he is unconscious of that, and therefore, he cannot be effective in that way. The direct descent of Divine Power must be consciously felt, for it is not the magnification of one's energy and power, which is sometimes the result of mystical life. It is really the feeling of the divine working. A man of genius has a natural talent of wonderful perception and fine constructive powers. The divine man is far above this, for it is not in the flowering of

faculties—which is of course the natural sequence of spiritual opening—but in the consciousness of the direct touch that the divinisation of life can be made possible. It is the installation of the Divine in all parts of our being. In the supreme fulfilment, the Divine influences and inspires every part of being. It is felt in our thought, contemplation and action. The sense of I is withdrawn and the Divine fills its place. This divine filling up of our being is what makes man the divine man.

It is difficult in all ages to understand such men, for they are so open in their lives and they see Truth so directly in them that it is not possible to fathom them completely. Truth is simple, and when it emerges out in the saying of great teachers, it becomes highly suggestive and potently significant and it takes sometimes centuries to understand their deeper implication in the terms of intellect. The parables of Christ have been the inspiration of the Idealistic philosophy in the West, the dialogues of Buddha have inspired sublime philosophy. Spiritual experiences and insights are dynamical and effective in every sphere of life. They inspire philosophy, they inspire action, they inspire life. The world has witnessed the effective force of creative spiritual personalities. The most silent and the most gentle are in the highest degree effective and inspiring. They reflect in them the future movement of civilisation for centuries.

Ramakrishna was such a man. He was great, but he was unconscious of his greatness. But the Divinity was shaping and moulding him in a way which made him a great radiating centre of spiritual influence. Spiritual influence can be better felt than under-

stood, and it scatters its power and influence in a way almost mysterious. But it is seen positively when the finest intellectual men are won over by their influence. Whatever they touch, becomes transparent; the ignorant become learned, the wise become sensible. Such is the majesty of the spiritual force. Ramakrishna gave enough evidence of this, because by his contact characters wonderfully changed. This transformation has been the secret of the influence of spiritual men, for they touch the central part of being and wake up a flame there which dispels doubts and establishes the divine connexion.

The greatness of a spiritual genius is to be measured by the capacity of infusing divine life in others and of waking up the sweetness of life in the struggling souls. Their superiority is there; they touch life direct, they elevate it from inertia and ignorance, and help to manifest its divine nature and beauty. The true spiritual genius, therefore, does not care to give any systematic thought, for his being is so rhythmical that he perceives eternal Truths directly and not through the mediation of thought. He dives deep into life and sympathetically inspires life. Ramakrishna thus used to inspire men by the touch of his highly strung soul. He used to give light that can never fade, life that can never lose its grace and beauty. He has not given a spiritual code, he has given a life that used to thrill men, that still thrills many to-day.

His work was to make divine life descend and establish itself on earth. The work has begun splendidly and let not the spirit of Ramakrishna be lost upon us. His mantle fell upon shoulders that are one by one passing away; but the spirit that was revealed

at Dakshineswar cannot be lost unless it has done its work completely—the saving of humanity from ignorance, suffering and miseries. Did not the Master chasten the disciple for his anxiety to pass into Nirvana by neglecting this suffering humanity?

Humanity to-day needs more than anything else the catholic spirit of Ramakrishna. The squabble between religion and religion, between race and race is to be dispelled before civilisation can be given a new orientation. Humanity is moving for a cosmic understanding and cosmic fellowship, and this cannot be seriously possible unless the inner man, which is the man of wisdom and faith, can appreciate the spiritual truths of all religions and the dynamic forces of all faiths. Ramakrishna helps this understanding by his example, and he goes down to posterity as the cementing truth of all creeds. His intensive regard for all faiths and his direct realisation of their equal fruitfulness show the greatness of his genius, for he must have gone the whole length of spiritual realisation before he proclaimed the efficiency of different faiths. Every faith has two sides, the outer intellectual appeal and the inner dynamic appeal. The revelation through faith is almost the same everywhere. Faith really moves life to realise the direct touch of God and to get His impress upon one's being. And in this realisation two more things stand clearly prominent, the silence of the Divine Puissance and the movement of the Divine Power. Spiritual life is nothing if it is not this.

The work which Ramakrishna began still stands unfinished, and may we not hope that his spirit is still active in men to make them more catholic in life, more responsive to

the divine currents in life, and see and feel the Divine in the downtrodden and in the suffering humanity and to serve them and raise them up? Ramakrishna is an appeal for widening our being and making it sensitive to the Divine in every man, so that civilisation may be established upon the consciousness of the divinity of man. It will

indeed usher in a new civilisation if this truth of the divinity of man is more clearly realised in the light of the teachings of Ramakrishna. May the guardians of humanity send to it light enough to realise this immortal truth! The world needs to-day a Peace based upon this understanding. Ramakrishna gives us this peace.

SEEING GOD

By Mrs. Gwyneth Foden

(Mrs. Foden is keenly interested in Indian thought and spiritual ideals. In her following appreciation of Sri Ramakrishna's message she draws pointed attention to his insistence on realisation as the essence of religion.)

MAN'S mission in life is to see God, perceive God, hear God, realise God,—through a struggle for divine oneness with the Lord and Master of the Universe, to attain a perfect spirituality, a perfect saintliness, a wisdom and a loveliness that shall transcend all material things, rendering them like dross in the alchemist's melting bowl. There will be limitations to the success we shall achieve, there will be set-backs, risks, disappointments, doubts, temptations, failures. We must weigh ourselves against them. Then will we be proud of our spiritual perfection.

We make allowances for different situations and different capacities. But that must not prevent our striving for the ultimate goal, the goal which will enable us to throw ourselves down at the feet of God, and whisper "At one with Thee, my God." Even those who fail are equal to the eye of sanctity. Everyone's road is different, each mortal awaits his moment—for he is the keeper of his own conscience. Many souls experience a sort of famine, a feeling of emptiness all

around. But where the spirit of God works, there are always two things found—conviction in the conscience and feeling of attraction in the heart. The latter is really the revelation of God to the soul, and God is light, and He is love. As light, He is conviction produced in the soul, but as love He is attraction of goodness. If we realise God, we feel the sweet odour of His presence. He manifests himself in a perfection which never belies itself. The love of God need not, like Human Society, protect itself from that which laid it too bare. IT WAS ALWAYS ITSELF!

We discover from time to time a divine mine of touching, exquisite thoughts, a depth of truth, which reveals a soul in intimate communion with the infinite love and perfection of holiness. This applies to the life of Sri Ramakrishna—the holiness of his soul made opportunities for the manifestations of infinite love. Or, rather, it was the love of God, a love clothed with grace which, by its very humility, placed him within the reach

of all by his saintliness and God-consciousness. His life throws a divine light on MAN'S MISSION and MAN'S DESTINY. He renounced everything for the sake of God. In his spiritual quest, there poured forth a true humility and wisdom in a ceaseless stream which, as his life revealed itself, became a strong river of convincing truth—truth that dawned upon him as a conviction that all gods ARE ONE GOD, in whatever form you worship Him; for He manifests himself in any form according to the wishes of the devotee. Men find the good they seek in the spirit of pure love. Show in your lives, he says, that religion does not mean words, or names, or sects, but it means spiritual realisation. Only those can understand who have felt; only those who have attained to spirituality, can communicate it to others, can be teachers of mankind. They alone are the power of light.

His language is beautiful because it is simple, fragrant; because it mirrors the mind of a saint who had no use for lies, for deceit, and chicanery, and would tell his message of God, wherever its inception might be. We hear that from daylight to nightfall, he was always engaged in ministering to the needs of hungry souls in quest of God—because he knew that the soul that walked with God, was not hard but submissive, and that there was no Spirit softer than it. God exercises the heart in all things, we are in His hands, His love is better than our will. Our conscience may be quite at ease while we are far from God, and unawakened. But the moment we are

in the presence of God, we see ourselves revealed in His light. The veil is off, and then God is seen and His word searches the thoughts and intents of the heart. God, the compassionate, the merciful, takes away our fears. Sri Ramakrishna felt that God was closer than our breathing. He said—WHEN THE ROSE IS BLOWN AND SHEDS ITS FRAGRANCE ALL AROUND, THE BEES COME OF THEMSELVES.

Sri Ramakrishna not only based his teachings on the philosophy of devotion, but considered the needs of men as a whole as other Hindu prophets had done before him by showing the various paths. Cry to God with a yearning heart, says Sri Ramakrishna—then you will see Him. The rosy light of dawn comes before the rising sun, likewise a longing and yearning heart is a sign of God-vision that comes after. The realisation of God's presence in one's heart was this saintly man's ideal. He saw God is everything, everywhere. He saw God in everyone.

His devotees accepted his teachings that all religions are equally true and lead ultimately to the same goal; and that all men are ultimately one in God and by ministering to their needs and responding to their call one is actually engaged in the worship of the Divine. First realise God, and all things shall be added unto you. Wisdom may be crusted over by ignorance, but it is never dead. It is always a bright light burning for us if we care to seek it, because the truth, for each of us is our own soul, nothing is worth anything compared with that.

THE NEED OF THE HOUR

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By K. S. Venkataramani, M.A., B.L.

[**Mr. Venkataramani** is a well-known writer and thinker. His books like "The Paper Boats," "Murugan the Tiller," "Kandan the Patriot," etc., have gained a great reputation both in India and abroad. The vigour of his style and the sublimity of thoughts always make his writings both instructive and inspiring. In the present article he seeks to discern the purpose of the 20th century and finds in the highest ideal of Dharma and Nishkamakarma the true remedy for the ills of modern life.]

ORLD affairs are drifting to conflict and chaos. The self-complacency of the nineteenth century had been violently disturbed even in the first decade of the twentieth. The Russo-Japanese war threw the first bomb on the fancied axiomatic superiority of the West.

But the twentieth century itself for all its rapid material progress and many-sided activities has not yet discovered its centre of peace, the increasing purpose of the century. The saying that works suited for one generation get fossilised in the next always holds good. Therefore till the twentieth century discovers its own line of rhythmic action by a thoughtful process of selection its activities however intense and sincere will not go towards the common weal.

So the century has got to discover its own prophet and thus unfold its increasing purpose. These thirty-five years it has not succeeded in doing so. But to a thinker who has tried to crystallise and focus the several lines of progressive activities both in the East and the West, it is evident that the century is slowly aiming at an economic equality, a regulated but intense production of wealth and a just and equitable distribution of the same according to the needs of the individual or of the community. Coupled with this, we distinctly discern a deeper spirit charging this

idealism for the social well-being of man, the slow development of a consciousness higher than that of the mind which seeks to give a new impulse to the motives of human action. This emphasis or movement in the progressive spirit of man may be summed up as spiritual, in its ancient and most exalted sense, an outlook which recognises the unity in the variety and the variety in the unity, and thus harmonises in one splendid vision the eternal conflict between matter and spirit, self-expression and self-realisation. As an ideal it is old as the hills but the century aims at a closer realisation of the same.

Coming to details, what afflicts now the twentieth century may be classified into three primary ailments. (1) Activity or expression of human energy is not on selected or approved lines. It is now cumulative, confused, repetitive, wasteful and conflicting under modern conditions. Selection is the law of life, the aim of evolution. And this inner urge for purity which leads to all refinements and progress has been clean forgotten under modern conditions of political organisation and conception of individual freedom. (2) Too much of the human energy is used up for the purely negative and non-wealth producing services of Government. Roughly, mankind sweats three months a year for the privilege of being governed in the



Swami Vivekananda

twentieth century. (3) On the economic side there is a real chaos prevailing at the sources of production, poverty in the midst of plenty. This chaos is inherent in the capitalistic and competitive conditions of our modern industrial and agricultural life, and this chaos becomes really intensified because of the political system based on a narrow and insular conception of nationalism, frontiers that parcel out the one human family into several titbits. It divides our life, breaks a continuous stream into a hundred stagnant pools. All this leads to a thorough mal-distribution of wealth inherent in the mode of production ; less wages to the real producer and more to the distributor, broker and middleman. This yawning gulf in monetary reward between skilled and unskilled labour when the common needs of man are almost the same is the primary source of modern misery.

We can emerge out of this state of competition and chaos only by a planned economy of life in all our spheres of activities, political, social and economic. Planned economy necessarily implies a rule of selection and a code of values based on certain definite and impersonal principles. This really amounts to the highest conception of Dharma, which has its essential foundations not on the selfish longings of man but on the selfless conception of a higher life, not on the fleeting but the permanent.

Therefore in the truest sense the need of the hour is also the need of

the eternal. Indian renissance which owes its power largely to the release of energy of great saints and souls like Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Swami Vivekananda etc., by which stands this. It will fulfil itself only if this great ideal of a spiritual outlook on life, which is based on Niskamakarma, is kept in view. Whether you take the individual, the nation, or the whole world as the unit for your judgment, you will eventually find that the individual is the pivot. So no collective organisation which forgets the refinement of the individual will keep its vitality a long time. This has always been remembered, perhaps a little too much, in Indian History. But the motto of life is that which keeps the primary need of the individual in view and helps his development by giving him a suitable organisation that which strikes the golden mean where the system helps the individual, and the individual blesses the system. The highest aim of evolution through the manifold channels of human activities is the gradual elimination of the Asuric type which acts for its own selfish pleasure, leading to the emergence of the divine type as outlined in the Gita. And one definite step in the emergence, in the long ladder of evolution, is the increasing purpose of the twentieth century. With courage and love we wait for the leadership. The etavan waits on the desert sand for yet another dawn.

A FRENCH PILGRIM'S OFFERING TO SRI RAMAKRISHNA

(*Jiva is Siva or the Living Being is God*)

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By Romain Rolland

[In the following paragraphs laid as an offering at the feet of Sri Ramakrishna on the occasion of his Birth-Centenary, the great French thinker places before us in brief the central message of Sri Ramakrishna's life and teachings from a point of view that is both positivistic and spiritual. To those who confound spirituality with barren other-worldliness, this article will be an eye-opener.]

IT IS related that when Sri Ramakrishna, in the first days following his great ecstasy, in the state of oneness with Brahman—and this was after Totapuri's departure allowed his consciousness to return to earth, he saw two boatmen quarrelling in hatred. And because of this hatred, as from a wound, his heart was bleeding; and he screamed; the sufferings of the universe were torturing him. For all the pains of the world were imprinting themselves into the tender flesh of his reawaking consciousness.

What would he have felt, what would he have suffered, in these days of the present world, when the whole humanity seems given up to hatred, when war rages or smoulders everywhere under the ashes, between nations, between races, between classes!

But the mighty Swan (Paramahansa) had wings that enabled him to hover above life. If he did not try to detach himself from life, as so many mystics do, to avoid its sufferings, it is because universal love, which was to him a second sight, revealed to him, in a flash, in the presence of human misery, that "Jiva is Siva,"—that the living being is God,—that whoever loves God must unite himself with him in sufferings,

in misery, even in errors and excesses, in the terrible aspect of human nature.

We all know that he took away his great disciple Vivekananda from the fascination of the fathomless God in order to force him into the service of men.—And that is what you, following his example, have been able to accomplish: you whose monastic Ramakrishna Mission, like your emblem, the swan, covers the unhappy with its wings and helps them as brothers. You have carried out the pregnant saying of your Master: "*If you want peace of mind, serve others... If you wish to find God, serve man!...*"

The enfeeblement and the ruin of so many religious lies in the fact that they have forgotten this saying. They have forgotten man. And man, in his turn, forgets them. He has learned to help himself without God, (as one of our European artists, and one of the most religious too, Beethoven, proclaimed when he said to those who called upon God for help, "O man, help thyself..."). He has even learnt to help himself against God,—whom he identifies with those Churches which, too often, stand against the mass of the oppressed as the courtesans or the handmaids of power. Has not the Catholic Church, the most powerful of these Churches

in Europe, laid down the cynical rule of ranging itself on the side of any power that has victory, provided only that it respects the church privileges? Thus they associate themselves with the injustice set up by force. The churches should not then wonder that oppressed peoples in their revolt against unjust force, associate the former with the force from which they want to liberate themselves. Although not conscious of it, those seething peoples, even when they believe themselves to be without God or against God, are nevertheless, to be regarded as the living God, while in their fight for justice, in their ascent towards light. "Jiva is Siva" ... And we ought to recognise this truth.

We live in a world turned upside down. And, indeed, the masses have always been downtrodden. But they had not, up to this day, the knowledge and the consciousness of that universal oppression, which has been revealed to them by the increased means of communications and the progress of international solidarity. We may no longer remain indifferent to those people who are today making a desperate effort to break their chains and set up a more equitable and more human order. And this is no longer permissible especially to us, your friends in the Occident who do not happen to possess like you the faith in survivals (lives after death). Time is pressing us. The wave of men's sufferings is drowning us, like a tide. We must fly to their help. Even if we had before us the eternity of "lives after death", each one of these lives is a "living thing" which has its own duties and its laws corresponding to the particular time of its birth and the human surroundings in which it has its course. Each single life is

neither permitted to leave undone all the present good it is capable of doing nor to decline to fight, with its total might of to-day, all the iniquities of the time being. The Ramakrishnite of the West that I am, I do not admit that for one's own salvation, one should withdraw from action, when it is urgent to act in order to help the oppressed. I remember the holy anger of the great disciple when he exclaimed to one of his brethren who was endeavouring to avoid the tragedy of the present world in order to betake himself to the sweetness of divine contemplation: "*Put off to the next life the reading of the Vedanta, the practice of meditation. Let this body of today be consecrated to the service of others!*"

And this immortal prayer :

"Would that I could be born and reborn again and suffer a thousand miseries, provided I might adore and serve the only God that exists, the sumtotal of all souls, and, above all, my God the evil-doers, my God the unfortunates, my God the poor of all races!"

Oh! what an error, too common among religious God-lovers, to think that their love diminishes and that their soul is lowered in value on account of intercourse with men. On the contrary, it expands and is revivified because of embracing the whole and entire Being, the innumerable Being, with its million forms ever in motion, ever advancing as they are, like a Ganges.

Doing thus, you will serve, by being wedded to it, each one of the forms of the living God; but without ever losing the feeling and the very presence of the all-powerful Unity, wherein these conflicting million forms find harmony. It is not doing a

wrong to the unchanging Divine Peace that hovers over the storms of Existence, if one holds out a hand to those who struggle in those storms. Vivekananda did not cease repeating to his Sannyasis that they had taken two vows, and that, if the first was "*to realise the truth*," the second was "*to help the world*" . . . "*To help men to stand erect by themselves . . .*" Let us help them, then, those peoples who, "*by themselves and alone*," heroically try "*to stand erect!*" Let us co-operate in their efforts! Even in this manner it will be possible for us afterwards to co-operate in the harmony of warring forces.

You are the bearers, in this storm-tossed world, of the Supreme Harmony wherein must blend and melt away all combats and opposite efforts. It is your proper role, your privilege, and your sacred duty, to radiate peace, order and unity in the chaos in which peoples are blindly at odds with one another. Be, like Sri Ramakrishna, the wide-spreading banian tree in whose shade thousands of souls, weary and wounded in the fight, come for shelter and peace. Pour on them the balm of reconciliation, which is the fruit of reason, no less than of love. We know well that the most

wicked are but misguided . . . they know not what they do. The greatest leader of the liberated peoples, Lenin of the U.S.S.R., victim of a dastardly outrage, calmed the vengeance of his friends by telling them, with his intelligent smile, "*What's to be done? Every one acts according to his knowledge.*"

The misfortune of the world comes from its want of knowledge. Let us then teach it to know. Let us enlighten it,—by preventing it from doing harm,—from harming itself. For he who harms his neighbour, does not know that it is himself whom he is harming. Another of our great men of Europe, the inspired poet Victor Hugo, speaking of those who wanted to harm him, uttered these beautiful words, so allied to the wisdom of India: "*Oh! fool, who thinkest that thou art not I . . .*"

It is the supreme miracle of Ramakrishna that in him "*thou*" is "*I*," that the whole world is not only reflected but incarnate in a man's heart,—that God is realised on earth, in his universality and his multiplicity . . . "*Jiva is Siva*" . . .

And Ramakrishna works in him in us—this Divine Identity

PRACTICAL RELIGION

By Har Dayal, M.A., Ph.D.

[Dr. Har Dayal, author and lecturer, is a graduate of the Punjab University and the University of London. His published works include the well-known books : "The Bodhisattva Doctrine" (Kegan Paul) and "Hints for Self-culture" (Watts). He is a member of P.E.N., and also Hon. Director of Modern Culture Institute, Edgware, England. His pointed insistence on the function of true religion as consisting in social and cultural upliftment of man is symptomatic of the times—symptomatic that thinking men today are no longer satisfied with religions whose stronghold lies in post-mortem promises. But we feel it necessary to state that true religion has a distinctive function and an ideal of its own besides what it shares in common with humanism and socialism. For while it is no doubt helpful to the just and harmonious ordering of man's life in this world, both socially

and individually, it has also a world-transcending aspect which constitutes its distinctive spiritual content. The good life, understood in the secularist sense, is for it only a means to an end. If this non-worldly (not other worldly) ideal encompassed by religion is lost sight of, there is nothing to distinguish it from the sectarianism of the Bolshevik State. But it must be emphasised that even the world-transcending ideal of religion, at least Vedanta understands it, is not post-mortem, but positivistic in conception—for Jivanmukti (liberation in life), which constitutes the end of Vedantic discipline, is realisable even in this life and not in an after-life. This Vedantic ideal is the necessary spiritual complement of Dr. Har Dayal's pragmatic views on religion.

I AM not interested in "religion" if that word denotes only a system or a theory for the attainment of bliss in Heaven after death or a happy re-birth or the ultimate liberation of spirit from matter. Such post-mortem dogmas do not appeal to me. I am also not keen on any philosophy or religion that only emphasises the duty of escaping from this changing world of sin, sorrow and struggle into a remote realm of eternal values. I judge every religious and philosophical system by the pragmatic test. "Does it help men and women to develop their personality?" "Does it make them healthier, richer, stronger, wiser and nobler?" "Does it produce just and enlightened citizens?" "Does it improve human life on earth in its material, cultural, aesthetic, ethical and spiritual aspects?" If it does not seem to do us any good here, then it is not likely to do us much good hereafter whatever its claims and pretensions may be. Reactionary or sterile religion must be rejected and discarded, but progressive and fruitful religion should be fostered and developed.

These are certain tests that should be applied to every religion or philosophy that is offered for our acceptance. The Vedanta too, must justify itself by its contribution to civilisation and human welfare, not by its theoretical metaphysics, which is admittedly meant only for monks and nuns. But there are several

million ordinary house-holders to one monk or nun in the world. If Vedanta does not assist the average man in the street, it is not of much value, whatever it may teach him for the salvation of his soul after many rebirths. We must be healthy, prosperous, well-educated and virtuous citizens before we can talk of "realising Brahman," etc.

Now all modern teachers,—Vedantists, Buddhists, Bahais, Theosophists, and others,—must declare for the unity of Mankind and condemn the caste-systems and class-systems that disfigure human society everywhere. "Brahman" or "God" or "Nature" knows nothing of lord and serf, Brahmin and Pariah, Sheikh and slave, master and servant. The unity of Mankind must be the fundamental tenet of practical religion in all its forms.

Unity implies equality. Equality is the very basis of all true ethics. We hear much of brotherhood and fraternity, but we sometimes forget that fraternity is meaningless without equality. Economic and political equality is indispensable for the maintenance of the spirit of brotherly love among the citizens. If some are rich and others are poor, there can be no genuine sympathy between the two classes. Some preachers speak learnedly on "Brahman" and "Atman" and "God" and "Dharma," but neglect the question of economic and political equality. They are

cowardly hypocrites and chatterboxes masquerading as "spiritual" guides. "Spirituality" without human equality is sheer humbug.

Equality of physical education and intellectual culture is also a necessary condition of social peace and development. Every true and useful religion must teach us the laws of hygiene and also inspire us to work for a better social environment. Vedanta or any other philosophy cannot be understood and realised by weak and sickly persons, and it cannot flourish in slums and dingy tenements. Religion must free us from disease and dirt, otherwise it is only a treacherous will-o'-the-wisp. It should also confer upon us the great boons of sound education and all-round mental culture. If a preacher is good and unselfish, but lacks knowledge and culture, then he is only a holy animal. Ignorant and saintly men have done much mischief in the history of the human race. True religion must be the ally of scholarship, research, adult education, and every form of intellectual activity. It must dispel the

darkness of Avidya, which produces superstition, frivolity and misery.

Practical religion must teach a noble and sound philosophy of the State, as Confucius, Plato and Aristotle attempted to do. The State is a fundamental institution of the greatest importance. This is a truism, but some "profound" metaphysicians talk only of the salvation of the individual soul, while they omit or under-estimate the claims of good citizenship. I believe that the citizens of a despotic, disorderly, corrupt or inefficient State cannot practise "spirituality" to any appreciable extent. True Vedanta, like all true religion, can flourish only in a democratic and free State, in which the people enjoy a very large measure of economic, political and cultural equality.

Thus the spiritual power that the example of Sri Ramakrishna bestows upon us should be utilised for the promotion of ethics, democracy, education, hygiene, economic reforms and social equality. This is practical religion for all.

LOVE—THE CONQUERING PRINCIPLE

By Hy. S. L. Polak

[Mr. Polak is well-known to Indians as a great friend and helper of Mahatma Gandhi in his South African struggle. He is also a sympathiser of the Vedanta movement in England and is on the committee for the celebration of Sri Ramakrishna's Birth-Centenary in that country. In this brief appreciation of Sri Ramakrishna he points out how his message is urgently needed by the world to-day.]

LEOKING around the world to-day, with lesser men arrogating sole power to themselves, as though they were semi-divinities, and persuading vast masses of men that violence of thought, speech, and act is the true law of life, it is good to turn to those

great leaders and teachers who have sought in another direction than that of hate and force for the ultimate explanation of man's existence.

When the Buddha taught the Law and Jesus taught love, they both sought and found a doctrine that brought Peace for mankind. If, there-

Fig. 1. - *Leptothrix Viellardii* in culture.





Open air Jatra. Vidyapith, Deoghar

fore we have not ourselves found it, the explanation must be that we have not sought deeply and earnestly enough—that we have not learnt the Law or the meaning of love.

We have developed a wonderful technique of differentiation and distinction, and have lost sight of the concept of totality and universality. We have built up divisions and partitions, and if, at times, we have had a larger vision and have tried to lower or pull down the partitions, it has only been to emphasise new divisions and so raise new partitions.

Probably man will never be a wholly reasoning being. At least, let us hope so. But the fact that he is, for the most part, unreasonable, would have utterly destroyed him long since, had it not been that he contains within himself an integrating principle more powerful still than the disruptive forces of unreason, which fails to discern in life a law of cause and effect.

What that integrating principle is the seers, the mystics, and the prophets have all agreed upon, though they may have expressed themselves in language differing in terminology.

Ramakrishna, the Paramahansa, is one of those great ones, simple in his origin and his life, who observed and made his own this single integrating principle, and he called it Love. It was, as he saw it, all-embracing, universal, both static and dynamic, of Divine origin but fundamental to human purpose, and eternal. His example and his teaching were such as to draw to him the allegiance of so great a personality as Swami Vivekananda, who, with a unique eloquence, made his message known in the Western world, which is still wondering whether it has not, after all, mistaken its path, and whether the ancient teaching of Love and Peace might not be given a positive and a practical trial.

No more important celebration could be held, at this moment, than the centenary of this great teacher who came to restore a living faith in an ancient and timeless doctrine. It is to be hoped that, when men so badly need encouragement and renewed belief in themselves and their purpose, this centennial celebration will help to pour new energy into the channels of life.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA AS I UNDERSTAND HIM

By Sir P.S. Sivaswami Aiyer, K.C.S.I.

[Sir P. S. Sivaswami Aiyer, K.C.S.I., is a noted lawyer, thinker and publisher of modern India. We are very glad to publish on this occasion his learned article on Sri Ramakrishna, giving a terse and effective account of what impresses him in the Master's personality and message against a background of India's cultural and spiritual traditions of the past.]

I HAVE been requested by the editor of the *Vedanta Kesari* to contribute to the special number of the magazine to be published in connection with the approaching centenary of Ramakrishna Paramahansa an article bearing on the life and

personality of Sri Ramakrishna. It is with great hesitation that I comply with this request, as I never had the good fortune to meet the great saint in life. Another handicap under which I labour is the very slight acquaintance I possess with the litera-

ture that has grown up around the personality of Sri Ramakrishna. Such knowledge as I possess is derived from Max Muller's "Life and Sayings of Ramakrishna" and from Romain Rolland's "Life of Ramakrishna." Both these works were largely based upon the accounts furnished to the authors by the disciples and admirers of the saint. While M. Rolland's work is inspired by a spirit of greater sympathy and understanding, the former claims to be critical and is written in a spirit of detachment by an eminent Sanskrit scholar who devoted his life to the task of making the sacred literature of the East accessible to the English world. Though strongly imbued with a natural conviction of the superiority of his own religion, Prof. Max Muller strove conscientiously to understand the spirit of Hinduism. The study of these two works, written as they are from somewhat divergent points of view and with differing mental attitudes, is helpful to an appreciation of the life and character of Sri Ramakrishna. I propose in this article to refer to those aspects of the life and personality of Sri Ramakrishna with which I have been impressed.

What was the secret of the great influence which was exercised by Sri Ramakrishna not merely upon his disciples, but upon the many educated men who came in contact with him, an influence which has endured even after his life and is still a living force, moulding the lives not merely of the members of the Ramakrishna Mission, but of a large number of others outside this circle? That Sri Ramakrishna was an ascetic or Sannyasin would not be enough to account for his influence, though a life of renunciation and austerity makes a great

appeal to the Hindu mind. There are many Sannyasins of learning and austere lives in India, but they have not exercised the same influence as Sri Ramakrishna who was an illiterate, poor Brahman priest without any knowledge of Sanskrit or English and without the advantage of a formal education in the sacred literature of India or its *Sastras*. Ramakrishna was a great Bhakta or devotee. But there are many in this country who have led a life of true religious devotion without commanding a tithe of the influence exercised by Sri Ramakrishna. Literacy and formal education are not essential to the achievement of greatness. The great Akbar, one of the greatest emperors whom India has known, is said to have been illiterate. That a man of humble origin without any claims to literacy or education should have cast a spell over the minds of all who came in contact with him and exercised an abiding influence upon all his hearers and even upon those who have only a second-hand knowledge of his teaching shows that there must have been something extraordinary about his personality and teaching. He owed his influence to a combination of spiritual gifts and traits of character. The singular charm of his disposition, the purity and simplicity of his life, his love for all his fellow-beings, his sympathetic understanding of the capacities, limitations and needs of others, his wonderful intuition and his personal magnetism contributed to it. The sayings recorded by his disciples reveal powers of shrewd observation, acute insight into human nature and deep spiritual wisdom, and withal an abundance of common sense and knowledge of the world not always to be found in men

whose lives are absorbed in religious meditation. His sayings and parables are full of telling and honest illustrations and can stand comparison with those attributed to the founders of other great religions. One is struck with a note of modernity in these sayings of Sri Ramakrishna which is undoubtedly due to the fact that he lived in the nineteenth century, and instead of leading a life of monkish seclusion, was accessible to all classes of people and mixed freely with them, endeavouring to understand their needs and aspirations and help them, whenever needed, by his advice and guidance. He lived in the world, though he was not of it. It is said that he had a wonderful gift of comprehension of the character of those who came to see him. He was willing to learn from anyone and everyone and from the exponent of every creed. A devout and unflinching searcher after truth, he strove his best to learn whatever was of value in the teachings of Christianity, Islam and other alien creeds. He mixed readily with the members of reforming sects of Hinduism like the Brahmo Samaj. But his anxious study of other creeds and sects furnished no reason for a change in his own beliefs. He was a Hindu to the marrow of his bones and was deeply imbued with the spirit of the Hindu religion and philosophy. His catholicity of mind, his readiness to appreciate whatever was good in other religions and his spirit of toleration for other faiths are characteristics not often found in men of ardent religious faith outside the pale of Hinduism. He hated disputation and polemics and he won his disciples not by the Socratic method of argumentation, but by his love and sympathy, by the example of his pious

and holy life and his enthusiasm for the service of mankind. His was the spirit in which Hinduism and Buddhism, the great religions of Eastern Asia, secured their adherents and spread through the East. An aggressive and militant missionary spirit is the characteristic of the two great Semitic religions of Christianity and Islam. There have been occasions in the past when Hindu religious leaders have been actuated by a spirit of militancy. But this has generally been displayed in intercaste disputes with rival sects rather than in attempts to convert followers of alien systems. The method which has generally found favour with Hindu missionaries in other lands has consisted in preaching the truths of their own religion and not in the persecution or vilification of other religions. Peaceful penetration has been the method usually adopted by the Eastern faiths.

One of the essential tenets of Sri Ramakrishna was that the fundamental truths of all religions are the same. It is this belief that accounts for his aversion to all forms of religious controversy, let alone acrimonious controversy. He believed in every man adhering to his own creed and was ready to grant to others the same liberty that he claimed for himself of following the Hindu religion.

I may now turn to the question of the contribution of Ramakrishna Paramahansa to the spiritual thought and uplift to mankind. As he was the founder of no new religion, so was he the founder of no new system of philosophy. He believed in the Advaita philosophy and he saw God everywhere in the universe. The doctrine of the immanence of God in the universe has not been acceptable

to Christianity. The chief difficulty felt by the followers of Christianity in accepting this view is in accounting for the origin of evil and in reconciling it with the doctrine of moral responsibility. On the other hand, those who deny the doctrine do not perceive the incompatibility of their view with the omnipotence and the omnipresence of the Supreme Being. To the Hindu mind it is a blasphemy to suggest limitations upon the power of the Almighty or His omnipresence, such as are implied in dualistic beliefs. But whatever may be the ultimate truth in the field of metaphysics, Hinduism has experienced no practical difficulty in reconciling its ethics and metaphysics. Sri Ramakrishna's own life furnishes a proof of the compatibility of the Advaita philosophy with an intensely devout and moral life.

The philosophy especially of the ascetics is often of a harsh, rigid and unbending type. Sri Ramakrishna did not believe in the suitability or propriety of renunciation as a rule of conduct for all and sundry. He recognised the claims of society upon the individual and did not encourage the neglect of the duties owed to society or the family. He shaped his advice to meet the needs of the different capacities, dispositions and stages of spiritual development of those who sought his guidance. He advised Keshub Chunder Sen not to abandon the world and told him that it mattered little whether he lived in the family or in the world so long as he did not lose contact with God. He perceived that the special mission of Vivekananda was to be a torch-bearer of truth and he advised him to disseminate the truths of Hindu religion, instead of adopting a life of seclusion

and Samadhi. It is a mistake to suppose that Hinduism inculcates a life of renunciation as the rule and aim of life for all persons. The Smritis declare that men are born with obligations to society which have to be discharged by the performance of various duties in the world. The precept that men should forsake all duties or Dharma and seek the Lord for salvation which is laid down in the Gita as well as the Bible has often been misunderstood and interpreted as justifying the renunciation of our duties to the world. The misunderstanding is due to our tendency to extract universal rules from the sayings of the religious leaders. We cannot expect the great religious leaders to be as circumspect in their utterances as the writers of systematic treatises, and to frame their precepts with the meticulous precision of a legislator. The founders of great religions have seldom been systematic thinkers or writers. The great function of the spiritual leaders of mankind is rather to guide the spiritual development of humanity by the example of their holy lives and to be a source and fountain of inspiration to a life of righteousness and selfless service to humanity.

What was the contribution of Ramakrishna Paramahansa to religious thought? Neither the teaching of Ramakrishna Paramahansa nor, for the matter of that, of other great religious teachers can claim absolute originality. The thoughts and ideas of the great religious leaders are generally the product of the culture of the age in which they live and of the ideas of the thinkers who have preceded them. The Advaita philosophy and the Bhakti cult in which Sri Ramakrishna believed have been

known to Hinduism for ages. The question would be legitimate in the case of scientists and others who work in fields where it is possible to add to the body of existing knowledge. But the fundamental problems of religion have engaged the attention of mankind from time immemorial and there is little that can be claimed as original in the teachings of any sage or prophet. They lay stress upon ideas and principles which men seem to be in danger of forgetting in the times in which they live. Their main function in life is to re-vivify mankind whenever it is in danger of forgetting its spirituality and the higher ends of life, and to infuse fresh faith and courage in men's minds in their struggles for spiritual advancement and for the uplift of humanity.

Sri Ramakrishna was a mystic and often practised Samadhi. That concentrated meditation on the Supreme Being may lead to some kind of spiritual communion with the Deity may be granted. But how far the experiences of men in a state of Samadhi can be regarded as voicing the ultimate reality is a matter upon which one may well entertain doubts. It would be difficult to distinguish the experiences of the mystics from those of hallucination.¹ For instance, I find great difficulty in accepting the

account on page 250 of Rolland's "Life of Ramakrishna" as veridical. Sri Ramakrishna's account that during a Samadhi he entered the transcendental realm and saw the seven Rishis in Samadhi and that the luminous ether condensed itself into a child which declared its intention to incarnate itself on earth as Vivekananda admits of a perfectly natural explanation².

both Eastern and Western, and has never found anywhere a solution that can satisfy an acute critic. From the practical point of view, however, every one accepts the reality of experiences that are effective in life. This is the only test practicable with regard to mystic experience too, and we accordingly distinguish the fancies of a maniac from the experiences of the mystic and classify the latter as fundamentally related to the structure of reality by observing their life-enhancing value. — Editors.

2. Regarding the specific experience of Sri Ramakrishna mentioned in the article, the child referred to is Sri Ramakrishna himself, and what comes down to be incarnated as Swami Vivekananda is a part of the body and mind of one of the sages. This was the explanation given by Sri Ramakrishna himself about the experience. For a detailed account the reader may refer to page 250 of Romān Rolland's life of Ramakrishna and page 438 of the Mayavati publication entitled "Life of Sri Ramakrishna." The modern study of psychic phenomena like telepathy, thought-reading, pre-vision, psychometry, etc., by the Society for Psychical Research, among whose members are some eminent scientists like Sir Oliver Lodge and Hans Diefeld, has proved that the so-called objective facts can be known super-normally, i.e., without the use of the senses or the reasoning faculty. When the modern scientific world is thus tending to recognise the capacity of even ordinary mediums to gain knowledge of facts in super-normal ways, why should we deny heightened powers of this type to spiritual men whose psychic being has been purified and sensitised by divine contemplation and arduous mental disciplines? — Editors.

1. We wish to point out that we are not in agreement with the views expressed in the last paragraph regarding the ultimate reality of the experiences of men in a state of Samadhi. It is true that a flawless metaphysical criterion to distinguish hallucination from mystic experience cannot be given. But from the strictly theoretical point of view the same difficulty appears in distinguishing dream from waking or the common illusions of life from what are called its brute realities. Thus the problem of illusion comes up for discussion in all systems of philosophy,

My scepticism with regard to the veridical character of Sri Ramakrishna's visions in no way affects my appreciation of his greatness. He was undoubtedly a man of extraordinary spiritual gifts full of God-consciousness, spiritual wisdom and deep love of humanity, which he had a remarkable faculty of communicat-

ing to his disciples and hearers. His is the sort of service which Jivanmuktas or emancipated souls are believed to render to humanity by lingering in the world for its spiritual instruction and guidance. Let us hope that the influence of this great modern seer and saint will long endure for the benefit of the world.

WHAT WAS RAMAKRISHNA'S POWER ?

By Prof. James B. Pratt.

[Prof. J. B. Pratt of Williams College, Mass., America is the author of "Religious Consciousness," "The Pilgrimage of Buddhism" and several other valuable books dealing with religion. He is one of the most eminent among the present day psychologists of religion, and his writings are as remarkable for their true grasp of, and sympathy for, the spiritual man's point of view as they are for their scientific and scholarly qualities. He is very much interested in the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Movement, and he remarks in one of his letters to us: "Ramakrishna and Vivekananda have been almost household words with my wife and myself for more than 22 years. We have read many books by and about them and have visited several Ramakrishna Centres in both India and America." The following article by him, though brief in size, refers in a pointed and effective fashion to the soul-life of Sri Ramakrishna and his true message to mankind in general and India in particular.]

ON my way to India for my first visit — which is now some twenty-two years ago—I made the acquaintance of a fellow passenger, a German, who had lived in Bengal for a number of years.¹ He was a business man who had met with considerable success, but the thing which stood out in his memory, from his many years' sojourn in India, was not his business ventures and achievements, but the experience he had had, in his first years of residence, that grew out of his contact with an Indian teacher and saint. He had heard stories of this man's holiness and peculiar influence, had been very sceptical of their truth, had decided to investigate the matter, and went to see the teacher. He "went to scoff and remained to pray." The teach-

ings and the life and the personality of the Indian had an effect upon him that he had never experienced before or since. It was an influence that drew him to the spiritual life and that antagonised everything worldly. It was a militant type of goodness that demanded complete surrender to the loftiest that one knew. After several months of contact with the teacher, my acquaintance found that the new life of spirituality and the prosecution of his business were mutually so incompatible that he must choose between them. One or the other must be given up or he would become a pathologically divided self. With infinite regret he turned away from the call to the higher life and broke off completely his relations with the Teacher. All this he told

me with a certain wistfulness which showed a suppressed but ineradicable regret.

He did not tell me the name of the Teacher: but I had reason to suppose it was Ramakrishna. In any case there is no doubt that Ramakrishna had this power of transmitting to those about him the flaming zeal for the highest which dwelt within his own soul, and eventually consumed his mortal life. The nature of this power is a subject about which I wish we might have more information, and which, had we means for investigating it, would furnish a most promising field for study to the students of the psychology of religion. The men who possess this power in an extreme degree are so rare, and the knowledge that psychologists have of them is so completely at second hand, that it is, as yet, impossible to give any satisfactory analysis or explanation of it.

We do, however, know a little about it. The five great historical Founders of religions—Zarathustra, Gotama, Confucius, Jesus, Mohammed—seem to have possessed this power in supreme degree. Our knowledge of Zarathustra, however, is almost entirely legendary, the Buddhist books have plainly been overlaid with monastic additions, and the records of the three others are exceedingly incomplete. Beside the Founders, one might mention a few other familiar names, among whom St. Paul, St. Francis, Sankara, Kabir, and Ramakrishna would be prominent.

What was it in these men that gave them their peculiar power? One thinks at first of the content of their teaching, the loftiness of their messages. To leave out this would be to leave out a large part of their secret.

But while this is an important part, it is far from being the whole of the explanation. The consistent devotion of their lives also surely made its contribution to the result. But no merely moral man, with lofty ideals and complete devotion to them, could have the effect upon his listeners and contemporaries and successors that was exerted by the unusual men I have referred to. In addition to ideals and devotion of a moral sort, these men possessed an energy and fervour linked up with religion, arising not from belief in a realm of spirit but from vision of it, from a life saturated with it, from a conviction, or rather realisation of its reality and supreme importance that goes beyond anything that can properly be described by the words, ethical insight or moral living.

Men who possess this power are rare indeed. But when they appear the influence they exert must seem to the observer almost supernatural. Probably it is not supernatural in the ordinary sense of that word; probably it conforms to the real laws of the human spirit. But do we as yet know all those laws? I do not think we find them in the text books on psychology.

No age has needed men of this stature more than ours. No age has been more in danger of making such men and their influence impossible. It is well to provide external conditions which will make evil doing less easy and moral living less difficult. But complete, fervent, joyous, contagious dedication to the highest spiritual life, together with the conviction that comes through vision, is the gift only of religion. I wonder, is the world becoming less religious?

I have been for some years an

honorary member of the Hindustan Association of America, and I have met a fair number of young Indians—students and businessmen—in my country. I get the impression that a considerable proportion of them have put off their religion as they have put off their Indian dress. Many of us in the West have been

brought up to believe that India is the stronghold of religion. I hope it is, but I am not so sure of its strength as I should like to be. Hence my gratitude to Ramakrishna, and my earnest hope that the Order which grew out of his flaming soul may communicate his spirit to more and more of his fellow countrymen.

THE RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

By Prof. P. N. Srinivasachariar, M.A.

[Mr. P. N. Srinivasachariar is the Principal and Professor of Philosophy in Pachalyappa's College, the premier Hindu educational institution in the Madras Presidency. As an educationist and philosopher, the professor has an all-India reputation, and his two well-known books *Ramana's Idea of the Finite Self* and *Bheda-Bheda* are read by every serious student of Indian Philosophy. He has been connected with the Ramakrishna movement from its very inception in Madras, and is one of the few persons in academic circles who have made a deep study of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda literature. Equipped with a life-long study of Eastern and Western Philosophy and endowed with the deep Hindu piety of a Vaishnava, the professor sheds much light on a difficult subject in the following survey of Sri Ramakrishna's religious experiences.]

THE inner history of the world process, especially in its critical periods, is a witness to the continuous revelation of the workings of God in humanity through the instrumentality of its saints and prophets. The spiritual hunger of the modern mind cannot be appeased by rigid dogmatism and ritualism but only by a living realisation of God verified by the pragmatic test of intellectual enlightenment and solicitude for the welfare of humanity. The advent of Sri Ramakrishna is therefore not a mere accident but marks a significant epoch in the history of religious realisation and inter-religious understanding. The supernatural happenings recorded in his life like incarnational birth and the gift of Siddhis or psychic powers cannot be dismissed as the result of the 'dialogic process' incidental to such biographies. On the other hand these facts of his life

together with his spiritual adventures and intuitive realisations of God have a unique value to the student of comparative religion and mysticism. The integral experience of the Infinite carries with it its own irrefutable certainty and authority. The only adequate proof of the existence of God is the experience of Him, and Sri Ramakrishna with his genius for God attained a transcendental and incommensurable divine consciousness.

The intense religious practice of Sri Ramakrishna was not a Yogic Sadhana in its conventional sense but a spiritual storm that raged over his whole being and swept away all trace of sensuality and sin. Yoga is not only a self-training but also a trust in the saving grace of God. It is not a mere psychological or ethical method of self-salvation but a religious aspiration for the re-union between the self and God or *Twam* and

Tat. Yoga in all its aspects involves the three factors of self-renunciation (*Vairagya*), self-knowledge and the attainment of the unitive consciousness. The first is the negative method of self-stripping or separating the self or *Aham* from its semblance of *Ahamkara* (egoism) functioning mainly through the acquisitive and the sexual instincts represented in Sri Ramakrishna's sayings as *Kanchana* and *Kamini*. To get rid of the former Sri Ramakrishna would take a clod of earth in one hand and coin in the other and consign both to the Ganges. When once money was offered to him he felt as if somebody was sawing through his skull. The sexual instinct was rooted out by the deification of woman. The worship of every woman as the image of the Divine Mother was consummated in the Tantric ceremony known as the *Shodashi Puja* in which Sarada Devi, the Holy Mother, who was both his wedded wife and nun-disciple in one, became the Deity and he himself took the place of the devoted worshipper. In the process of worship both were absorbed in deep *Samadhi* in which the Goddess and the worshipper were united in the transcendental unity of the Self.

In the second stage known as introversion the tumult of the senses is silenced and the self separates itself from its physical semblances and gravitates towards God. The practice of introversion at Panchavati in the Dakshineswar Temple was so intense that Sri Ramakrishna lost all caste and body consciousness. The hair was matted and birds would perch on the head; snakes would crawl over the motionless body and there was no wink of sleep for six years. The methodic practice of Yoga was

then transfigured into a restless yearning of the Mumukshu (seeker after liberation). The human instincts were sublimed and transformed into the instinct for the Infinite. This organic craving for God is the supreme condition or consequence of mystic consciousness, though it may be brought about by Raja Yoga, Bhakti Yoga or Jnana Yoga. Though the starting point may be psychologically accounted for, the goal is ultimately the same, viz., the realisation of God and the communication of Godliness to others.

Ramakrishna, the priest of Kali at Dakshineswar, was soon possessed by the irrepressible yearning to see Her. His faith turned into a frenzy and ceaseless outpourings of love which expressed itself in tears, tremors and trances. Owing to the rush of blood caused by excessive emotion his face and chest were flushed. In his desperation he one day seized a sword in the temple and was about to put an end to his life when he had a direct vision of the radiant form of the Mother, and his being was swallowed up in ecstasy. Religious faith was thus transformed into a soul-sight of God.

Superconsciousness is attributed by the medical materialists, who regard matter as the mother of the Universe, to the psycho-physical disorders of a highly wrought and hysterical temperament and also to auto-suggestion or self-hypnotisation. Extremes seem to meet but they are really poles apart, and God-consciousness is radically different from nature mysticism and psychic semblances and is easily recognised by its pragmatic expression in the form of intellectual illumination and beneficent service to humanity. The supra-rational is opposed to the irrational but is the fulfilment of the rational.

The frequent visions and voices that Sri Ramakrishna experienced were only the intimations of superconscious Samadhi and not Samadhi itself. The occurrence of such phenomena may be the psychological concomitant of Yogic Sadhana, but are not essential to religious experience. They are mostly the expressions of the soul-sight, of the shock of supreme illumination, in terms of the purified contents and cultural patterns of the mystic's subconscious mind. The natural explanations which psychologists offer of such occurrences do not in any way invalidate the fact of spiritual experience.

Raja Yoga aims at the liberation of the infinite spirituality of Kundalini coiled up at the lowest extremity of the spinal column. When it is aroused, it mounts up with a tingling sensation to the Sahasrara or the state of superconsciousness. Sri Ramakrishna experienced the rising of the Kundalini in five ways, namely, the ant-like motion, the frog-like motion, the serpentine motion, the bird-like motion and the monkey-like motion. The Sahasrara is from the Advaitic point of view the seventh plane of expansive consciousness in which consciousness remains without its relativity. The sixth centre is that of the Personal God, and the Personal is ultimately self-transcended. The acquisition of supernatural psychic powers or Siddhis invariably accompanies Yogic developments but it is not essential to the Mumukshu (seeker after liberation). Sri Ramakrishna therefore rejected these powers given to him by the Mother.

The Tantric Sadhana in its highest forms is a grand synthesis of Karma, Bhakti, Yoga and Gnana. In some of its adaptations it inculcates prac-

tices which consist in transcending sensibility by fulfilling its demands but such a fulfilment often deteriorates into voluptuous license. Sri Ramakrishna who was the very pattern of Sattvic virtue practised only the Sattvic aspect of it, known as Divya Bhava which insists on absolute self-control and purity.

Bhakti Yoga is interested not in the dialectic analysis of the self-contradictions of relational thought but in the relation between the self and God which deepens into mutual longing and self-loss in the love of the 'other'. Bhakti has its own logic ; it overcomes the idea that the self and God are mutually exclusive centres existing in their own solid singleness. The real omnipotence of God consists in His all-compelling love and eternal giving of Himself, and 'the most intense self-effacing love ministers to the intensity of the double fruition.' The Bhakta does not bargain with God; he seeks God only and not his gifts. Sri Ramakrishna was a second Chaitanya in his divine fervour which was disciplined into the varieties of Vaishnavite experience by the initiations he received from Bhairavi Brahmani and other Gurus (teachers) of the path of Bhakti (devotion). Bhakti is a ladder of love in the ascending order of divine intimacy known as Santa, Dasya, Sakhya, Vatsalya and Madhura, and each stage has its own specific feeling tone or Rasa. Santa results from introversion and concentration on the inner quiet of Kuivalya or 'aloneness' but it should not lapse into quietism. The Dasya Bhava is absolute submission to the will of God as of an ideal servant to his master, and is typified in the love of Hanuman to Rama. With his usual thorough-

ness Sri Ramakrishna so identified himself with Hanuman in the practice of this Bhava that there was an enlargement of the coccyx. The idea of God as the Holy inspires reverence and not inner unity. True Bhakti is not, however, consciousness of the two wills but their confluence or union in one Spirit. The Sakhya Bhava is the fellowship with God resulting in the consciousness of divine accessibility. The Vatsalya form is the motherly tenderness and solicitude of Kousalya for Ramlala or of Yasoda for Sri Krishna. The Madhura Bhava perfected in the Maha Bhava is the fulfilment of the other Bhavas. It is a spiritual marriage in which the soul is caught up in the flame of love and inwardly embraced. Love develops into Rati and deepens into Prema or the intense longing of Radha for Krishna, the beautiful and blissful "Divine Dark," which burnt itself into Sri Ramakrishna's heart.

The agony of separation had its bodily expression in the suspension of the functioning of the senses and the oozing out of minute drops of blood from the pores of the skin. The Lord of love likewise longs for His 'other', and their separateness expires in the immortal ecstasy of communion.

To verify the truths of Islam and Christianity he identified himself with their followers and had a vision of Mahomed and of Jesus of Nazareth.

Jnana Yoga is a philosophic method of self-analysis and the withdrawal of consciousness from the subject-object relation to the transcendental state of Nirvikalpa Samadhi. This retreat from the surface to the centre is not a process of psychic stilling or lapse into quietism but the self-knowledge of the Absolute. Equipped with the four-fold discipli-

nies for Advaitic realisations, viz., discrimination of truth, renunciation of worldliness, ethical purification and intense longing for liberation, and initiated into the nature of Samadhi by his Guru, Totapuri, Sri Ramakrishna practised the 'Neti', 'Neti' method or *via negationis* by the isolation of pure consciousness from the distractions of sense-impressions and self-feeling, and soon realised the super-conscious state of Samadhi. Consciousness freed from its relational activities expands into infinity and shines in its own ineffable light beyond light and darkness. Even the beloved form of the Mother had to be dissected by Advaitic thought, self-transcended and dissolved into supra-personal Absolute. Saguna Brahman (Personal God) is Sat-Chit-Anandam (Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute) personified, and in Samadhi it melts away as the iceberg at dawn and the salt doll immersed in water, and self-consciousness expires in the eternal bliss of Nirguna. For six months at a stretch he was lost in that state. Flies would enter his mouth and his hair was matted with accretion of dirt. Finally a terrible attack of dysentery dragged him down to the phenomenal plane, and in the interests of humanity he remained on the threshold of super-consciousness during the rest of his earthly life and spent himself in spiritual service and communication of godliness to humanity.

The prophetic advent of Sri Ramakrishna augurs well for the religious regeneration of the world and the reign of righteousness and peace in this mechanistic age. To him religion was not a dogma of the heresy hunting type or a special revelation to a chosen community but a direct realisation

of God and the fundamental unity of all the world religions. The uniqueness of his experience, which has already passed into history, consists in the universality of its religious appeal, and it has set free a rejuvenated form of Hinduism suited to modern democratic requirements. To him religion is not merely seeking and seeing God but a divinely ordained vocation governed by the motive of elevating the whole of humanity to the level of God. It thus harmonises the mystic quiet for eternal bliss and the needs of historic revelation—the personal and the impersonal, the spirituality of the contemplative and the activism of the altruist. Religions are not contradictory but complementary, and the theological deductions resulting from the application of formal logic to dogmatic presuppositions are the fore-runners of tragic fanaticism and are repugnant to religious wide-heartedness. Personal verification is indispensable in estimating the value of religious faith, and the effect of psychology on

faith is inescapable. Though religion is one, its experiences are varied. The Siddhanta or logical method of 'either—or' should be supplemented by the synthetic mystic insight contained in 'both—and'. The spiritual hospitality of Hinduism incarnate in Sri Ramakrishna is not a pantheistic or eclectic piecing together of bits of faith but is the recognition of their individuality influenced by the indwelling love of God in all religions.

The infinite possibility and suggestiveness contained in the life of this super-mystic and prophet was first brought out with apostolic fervour by Swami Vivekananda and is gradually unfolded and made explicit by the Math and the Mission bearing Sri Ramakrishna's name. Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda are the static and dynamic aspects of the New Dispensation. History repeats itself and the relative significance of the two lives compel comparison with that of Socrates and Plato, Buddha and Ananda, and Jesus and Paul.

THE LIVING PRESENCE

By Sister Devamata

[Sister Devamata, the authoress of *Days in an Indian Monastery*, *Sri Ramakrishna and His Disciples* and several other books, is well known to the readers of the *Vedānta Kesari*. American by nationality, she has devoted her whole life to the cause of Vedānta. In this article, written as a tribute to the one hundredth birthday of Sri Ramakrishna, the Sister places some of the most intimate and sacred experiences of her life before the readers. She makes her reason for doing so sufficiently plain in the course of the article. We for our part publish it for the reason that it will go to strengthen the faith of the numerous devotees of Sri Ramakrishna and reassure them that the Great Master is still a living personality in our midst, capable of being contacted by an earnest and prayerful soul. We request our readers to give a reverent perusal to this article.]

THE day is drawing to its close. The quiet of the twilight hour is upon my spirit. Evening shadows fall about me. Through a vista of

more than thirty years of active service as a member of the Ramakrishna Mission I look back over life in long perspective. What I write now, I had

thought to leave for ever unsaid. I shrink from setting down on the printed page experiences so sacred and personal that I have never voiced them save to one; but what pertains to the Great Ones of the earth cannot be hidden. It belongs to all men, not to an individual.

I remember when some years ago a letter was found telling of St. Paul. It was written by an obscure Christian to another unknown follower of the new faith. It told how the writer had waited all day by the gate of the city, watching eagerly for the coming of the preacher of the Nazarene. She expected to see him enter, a stately figure mounted on a charger, and deep was her disappointment and surprise to perceive in the multitude a small figure, bow-legged, hook-nosed and cross-eyed. This was the great Paul!

The author of the letter has dropped into complete oblivion, but the picture of the mighty disciple of the crucified Christ stands out still in undimmed relief. So, I hope will the seer of the living Presence be forgotten and only the Presence remain, to bear witness to the glory and bounty of the one who shone through it.

My task is not self-chosen. An oft-repeated urge, both from within and from without, compels me to it. A letter from Swami Shivananda, for many years the Head of our Order, also lends it insistence and definiteness. The letter reads:—

"MY DEAR SISTER DEVAMATA,

I was so pleased to get your letter of the 20th instant, the day after the thirtieth anniversary of your entrance into the work. Your letter speaks so much of the work and I am joyous to feel how unselfishly you love it. I know

what great a part you have played in it and still are doing with a frail body, but with a spirit which is getting stronger and stronger in conviction. Your connection with the work is not of thirty years existence, but I think your whole existence is related with it. Pioneers do not take birth, but they come along with the birth of a movement. The stage gets arranged, behind the curtain of birth. As it rises up, the characters come one by one to play their part in different climes and countries. You are one of such characters. Their distinctive features are: their heart impels them to join in the movement, and they share the vicissitudes and fortunes of it with full faith in the cause. So to my mind your association with the work and with Paramananda has taken place at the will of Sri Ramakrishna. You are a blessed one. You will live as long as his name will be honoured here."

Those who tell of a Divine manifestation are simple chroniclers, not makers of literature. Their duty is to preserve the tradition that the mighty Ones of God may live on in the hearts of men. This is my intent in giving out these visions. They were not psychic visions, they were not dreams, they were not imaginations, nor was the Great One who came in them an apparition. He was a pulsing Presence, a living personality. The warmth and radiance of his being were clearly perceptible; and in my being also, when the Presence came, there was a peculiar unaccustomed glow. It was as if a bright light was flashed on in every

atom of my mind and heart and even in the body. Sometimes the glow preceded the Presence, as if to herald its approach; sometimes it came with it; but always its influence lingered after for hours and even days.

If the Seers of ancient India, or the mystics of mediaeval Europe, or all those who have seen and heard, had locked their visions in the deep recesses of their hearts and kept them secret, the world would have been incalculably poorer. Even the witness of lesser devotees has value to strengthen the faith of men and lend them courage to go forward.

So now as the sun nears its setting, I break the silence of years and share this spiritual confidence of my life, in the hope that through it others may gain a deeper realisation of the spiritual grandeur and boundless mercy of one of the greatest among the Great Ones who have come to earth as Saviours of men.

I

Holy Mother outlived Sri Ramakrishna by many years. When after his passing, she was removing her ornaments and her bordered sari to wrap round her the unbordered cloth of the widow, Sri Ramakrishna appeared to her and said reproachfully: "What are you doing? Do you believe I am dead?" Silently she replaced the bangles on her arms and wound about her once more her bordered sari. Her widowhood was ended.

To lesser souls also were granted proofs of this living Presence. Of some of these I would now tell. I had fled from the hurried life of New York to the calmer atmosphere of Boston and was spending my days in seclusion and silence. One afternoon, as I sat alone in my living room, troubling over my aimless future, suddenly two

figures stood before me. The face of one shone with a super-earthly smile, which seemed to shed an effulgence over his whole being. In quiet tones he spoke these words: "Do not grieve. You have work to do for me." Then both figures vanished, but the sense of their presence lingered for many days.

In the early spring I returned to New York and soon after became a member of the Vedanta Society, being put in charge of the Publishing Department. At that time books came out in rapid succession; my hours were very full and I was in frequent consultation with the head of the work. One late afternoon he called me to his private duty to talk over a new publication. As I entered the room, my eyes fell upon a photograph hanging over the mantel. I stood still, transfixed. It was the figure I had seen in Boston. I walked quickly across to the fireplace and asked almost abruptly, "Of whom is this a picture?" The head of the work replied quietly: "It is my Master, Sri Ramakrishna."

A year passed. The anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna's birthday came. It was observed very austerey at the New York Society. Of the fifty or sixty members who attended the celebration, scarcely one tasted food or drank water from before sunset on the previous evening until after sunset on the evening of the birthday. This was done, not to mortify the flesh, but to give greater freedom to the spirit. All day we sat on the floor of the class room without mat or cushion, meditating, praying, or listening to the reading of sacred books. There were brief recesses, but a hush of holy silence was upon every heart and there was

little conversation—that little being in low undertones.

The atmosphere was charged with fervour. The last hour of prayer had come. We had been told that whatever we asked for in this culminating moment of the day would be granted. I could think of nothing for which to ask. No desire entered my thought, or rather only one,—to see Sri Ramakrishna once again. The stillness in the room was breathless. Something impelled me to open my eyes and there on the platform amid the masses of flowers, which had been brought in as offering, stood the living Presence.

It was the same figure that had come to me in Boston, yet not the same, for it was clothed in a single long white garment and both body and robe were so shining, so transparent that I could discern through them the faint outline of the flowers behind. But the smile on the face was the same and there radiated from it the same power, the same gentle benediction. The figure stood there for a few seconds with hands outstretched in blessing, then was gone. I looked about. All eyes were closed. Had no other seen?

II

In the autumn I entered on a course of intensive spiritual training. It called for great regularity, careful diet and above all for firm resolution. I charted my day as a sea-captain might chart his voyage. I rose early, ate lightly, had fixed hours for spiritual practices; and stated hours for publication work, which involved much editing, typewriting and proofreading. Some time was spent in the open, and some at the Society house, attending to book orders and other publishing business. I was full of en-

thusiasm and confidence, but in my heart there was one grievance.

The training which I had undertaken included the practice of posture, breathing exercises, an exercise in concentration, and a subject of meditation. This last was the cause of my grievance. It had been my habit, prior to my new plan of life, to make Sri Ramakrishna himself the subject of my meditation. The subject now given me seemed dry and mechanical. I bore with it for several weeks, then I made appeal to the head of the work, who was directing my studies, and he gave his immediate consent that I return to my old form of meditation.

I was living in a delightful apartment not far from the Society house. In it I had fitted up a private chapel. That night I entered this with a new eagerness. I took my place before the altar, went through my exercises, and was just beginning my meditation when Sri Ramakrishna stood before me—not the Ramakrishna of Boston or of the birthday, but a colossal figure made of pure light, with silken garments. Overawed, I fell on my face before it, crept slowly nearer and laid my forehead on the feet. I knew no more. When I returned to normal consciousness I found I had been lying in front of the altar for more than an hour. What transpired in that hour I shall never know; but it left me with a new outlook on life, a new vision in my heart.

At the hour of meditation on the following evening Sri Ramakrishna came again, in his usual form, but surrounded by a glowing light. As I gazed at him in devout wonder, he cast off his body as he might a garment and stood clothed in light. He seemed, however, less overwhelming, less awe-inspiring than at the first

coming. A subtler tenderness lingered like a fragrance about him, taking away all sense of awe or fear.

A third day he came, again at the hour of prayer. He looked more like the photograph over the mantel, which had first told me of him; but his body seemed only a lantern, in which burned a dazzling flaine, sending out broad beams of light all about him. No word was spoken—neither on this nor on the previous days; but from a silence that was radiant and charged with meaning, I had learned that whether clothed in an earthly body or manifest in super-earthly glory, Sri Ramakrishna was a living Presence, moving among men to aid and bless, to guide and shield, in the fullness of his love.

III

Four months later, in February, I was asked to prepare a compilation of the sayings of Sri Ramakrishna. It was to be done for the head of the work who had not the leisure to do it himself. No task could have been more pleasing to me. I set out on it with ardour. I went, column by column, through long files of old periodicals, searching for a word or a sentence that might have fallen from Sri Ramakrishna's lips and been recorded in some one's reminiscences.

I read carefully various small collections, some of them out of print. I exhausted every possible source and finally brought together nearly seven hundred sayings. To put these into a book in unordered sequence seemed to me unintelligent. I decided, therefore, to classify them into chapters with marginal headings and as far as possible to arrange them to make consecutive reading.

It was a long and arduous labour, yet one I was reluctant to leave even

for an hour. I rose at dawn and worked far into the night. I went back and forth through the sayings, each time culling out those that belonged together in a chapter or under a marginal heading. This classification had not been attempted before, so I was doing pioneer work. Day after day the glowing words burned deeper and deeper into my consciousness. I walked in their rhythm, I ate with them sounding through my thought, I slept with them on my lips, I was consumed by them.

The spring came. April was here and I had promised to have the new collection of sayings in print before the summer. The final copy of the manuscript was nearing completion. I was working on it busily one morning when I felt a tapping on my shoulder. I was alone in the apartment, so I thought that some moisture had condensed on the skylight overhead and was dripping down. My living-room was really a studio. I put up my hand to brush away the drops and went on with my typewriting.

Again the tapping came. There could be no doubt,—it was a human touch. Startled, I turned quickly and saw Sri Ramakrishna standing just behind me on the left side. He looked as in his picture and was impressively living. I seemed to feel the warmth of his hand as it rested on my shoulder. No light shone from him, only the radiance of his smile made him luminous. He was dominantly a living human Presence. He remained for a brief moment, then disappeared.

As it is not possible to surprise the opening of a flower or the unfolding of a leaf—the plant or tree keeps its secret; so I was never able to discern how the Presence came or how it went.

It was there and it was gone. The manner of its coming and going was never disclosed. These words of Avicenna best describe it. "It was like a flash of lightening shining over the meadow and disappearing as if it had never gleamed." But the gleam of the Presence lingered after.

IV

My life became a wandering one. I moved from India in the far East to California in the far West, with long intervals of pause at intervening centres of the work. In 1923 Swami Paramananda founded Ananda Ashrama in the hills of the Sierra Madre range near Los Angeles. It was established as an extension of the Vedanta Centre of Boston, where I had served for a number of years as the Swami's assistant. It was now in the same capacity that I took up my residence at the new Retreat.

Gradually various buildings were erected, among them an impressive Temple dedicated to the Universal Spirit. I formed the habit of going to the Sanctuary of the Temple for a quiet hour of prayer after the household had retired for the night. Thus it was that late one night I mounted the steps to the upper terrace and unlocked the side door of the Temple. It seemed very big, very dark and very still, as I entered. I was glad to escape from this silent outer emptiness to the more protecting space of the dimly lighted inner Sanctuary.

I knelt before the altar and began repeating a sacred name. I do not know how long I had been kneeling there, when noiselessly and quite naturally the walls behind the altar rolled back. My eyes rested on the vista of hills beyond without surprise or wonder, ~~it seemed~~ in no way ex-

traordinary that I should see them. As my gaze lifted from hill to hill, it was drawn to a blazing light on the highest peak. In the centre of the light stood the living Presence. A long shawl fell about it, the colour of which was neutralised by the dazzling light; the face shone with a super-earthly effulgence and from the outstretched hands there poured a radiant blessing.

The figure stood thus for a moment, then began to descend towards the Temple. It did not follow the slope of the hill, but moved on a direct path of light. As it drew nearer, I could discern that the light which created the path came from the feet of the one who walked upon it. Downward the Presence moved on the shining band of light, majestic, silent, awe-inspiring, yet radiating such tenderness of love that all sense of fear or marvel melted.

It approached slowly, reached the Temple, entered the Sanctuary through the open walls, which rolled together and took its place on the right side of the altar with the hand resting on it. The transfiguring light dimmed and Sri Ramakrishna of the hilltop became the Ramakrishna of his earthly embodiment. He looked as when he walked visibly among men. He stood in smiling silence for a moment, then began to speak. What he uttered was spoken to the heart rather than to the ear and was meant only for the one who heard.

It was very late when I left the Sanctuary. The figure still stood beside the altar and for four days whenever I entered the Temple at the hour of worship I saw it there more real and glowing than those who knelt in prayer before the Sanctu-

ary gate. The Temple was charged with the power of its Presence.

Several years stretch between this and Sri Ramakrishna's next coming. The gap is in the narrative alone. Only a few salient experiences are included in it. To translate into the written word the close association of the Presence with my daily life would be impossible. It guarded my safety, guided my effort, enveloped me with a love that renewed, healed and sweetened. All it asked in return was the devotion of a humble heart.

I was still living at Ananda Ashram. The winter nights in California are cold and often stormy. To avoid exposure to the occasional inclement weather, I was persuaded to abandon going to the Temple for the late hour of prayer and to sit up, next to my study, a private chapel. The room set apart for it was one of three in a wing of the cloister where I lived alone. It had served originally as the household Sanctuary before the Temple was built, and had been unused since the Sanctuary had been transferred to the Temple.

Ten years' residence in Europe had caused me to gather many things to make a Chapel lovely. Among them was a rare hanging, several centuries old, which had hung in the chancel arch of a Spanish church. It had been woven by the monks of Salamanca and also embroidered by them. Even the embroidery silk was the product of their own silk worms. The hanging had taken form and served always in holy surroundings. Sanctity pervaded it, and it seemed to belong where we placed it—on the wall behind the altar.

When the Chapel was finished, it was so filled with uplifted beauty and power that I could not keep it for my-

self. I began to share it with others. Those who saw it asked to bring friends to its door. Others heard of it and begged the privilege of seeing it. So many came; but not one ever stood at its threshold for a moment of silent prayer who did not thank me with tearfilled eyes for the blessing received.

There were some in the household, however, who criticised me for showing it so freely. They felt that a personal Shrine should be kept for the person alone. Their thought troubled me not a little. I shrank from decorating anything so sacred as was the little Chapel to me. I determined to let a higher Power decide it.

I went to the Temple and made appeal for guidance. No answer came; but later when I opened the door of the little Chapel, I was amazed to find it apparently empty of furnishings. Only the hanging remained. Before it stood Sri Ramakrishna, his face alight with that radiant smile which seemed a very part of him. He held out his hands as if in tender greeting and said to me: "This is the welcome I give to all who come here." I knew now why every one who came to the little Chapel felt there the power of a great Presence.

V

Buonaventura in his Life of St. Francis of Assisi relates that when St. Francis received the Stigmata or Christ-wounds, he was troubled as to whether he should make it known. He called several of the closer Brothers of the Order and asked council of them. One Illuminatus by name, replied, "Brother, not only for thine own sake, but for the sake of others, the Divine Mysteries are made known to thee. Therefore, thou shouldst fear

to conceal this which thou hast received for the benefit of many."

The Divine is present in every human heart. It is the eternal part of man. The forces of Nature must be at its command, since to the Divine all things are possible. Why then could it not take form as a living Presence and become the daily companion of the devotee, who through intensity of devotion calls it forth. It may appear in different forms, it may bear different names, it may come in different ways. That is determined by the devotee's conception of Divinity, but that it comes, there can be no doubt.

To Santa Teresa of Spain it came as Christ; to Sri Ramakrishna as the Mother of the Universe; to Saul it was the Voice on the road to Damascus; to the *Zelanti* or "zealous ones" of the early Franciscan Brotherhood it took the form of Angels or the Crucified One. To my more modest vision it appeared as Sri Ramakrishna—not because I had abandoned Christianity, but because Sri Ramakrishna by the fervour of his catholicity had made all religious faiths and the one God behind them more real and vital to me.

I have never tried to analyse or explain the experiences recorded in these pages. A study of pure mathematics and of recent discoveries in physics and astronomy has taught me beyond all doubt that there are finer laws and subtler forces than those evident to our senses, or even to that sixth perceptive sense, the mind. In so well-ordered and highly evolved a universe as the one in which we live, even the most apparently impossible may become possible.

The appearance and disappearance of a pulsing living Presence is no more occult a miracle than the hidden func-

tioning of the human body or the growth of a towering tree from a tiny seed, or the blossoming of flower on a barren hillside. Nature does not need to break a law to perform her miracles, she has merely to obey a subtler law. She may seem to defy the visible, but it is only to call into play a more effective invisible agent.

All life is a miracle. Even our mistakes have an element of the miraculous in them, since through them we learn what otherwise we would never know. The future is a mystery to be solved; the present is another mystery which escapes us before we can lay our hand upon it. The workings of Nature remain always mysterious. She builds her laboratories in the hidden places to which she alone has access.

Scientists are pressing hard upon her. As they force her to reveal herself, they find they must deal with both the immeasurably large and the infinitesimally small—light-years on the one side, protons and electrons on the other. Astronomy and physics are in process of complete readjustment. Conceptions of time, space, distance, of ether, of the constitution and alteration of heavenly bodies, all hang in the balance. In this wide-sweeping reorganisation, undoubtedly room will be found for many hitherto unexplained and unaccepted phenomena.

The fundamentals of creation are being reduced to smaller and smaller particles; subtler and subtler forces are being released. Science is drawing close to the realm of spirit. The subtle acts silently and swiftly, it penetrates easily, gathers form and dissipates it quickly. Why then is it not possible for Christ to appear on

the battlefields of Flanders, seen by many; or for the light which blinded St. Paul to contain a Holy Presence that spoke to him; or for a celestial being to press the Christ-wounds on the hands and feet of St. Francis?

Man is uncovering more and more of life. The time is not far distant when he will uncover death—not by

trivial psychic manifestations, not by test tube or microscope, but by the revelation of subtler laws. In observing the working of these, he will learn that it is in no way contrary to nature that a Great Soul, highly spiritualised and highly sensitised, is able to walk the earth, whether in the flesh or in the spirit, a living Presence among men.

AS MANY VIEWS, SO MANY PATHS

By D. M. Datta, M.A., Ph.D.

[Dr. Datta is the Professor of Philosophy in the Patna College. He is the author of the masterly book on the epistemology of Advaita Vedanta entitled "Six Ways of Knowing" which is the only book of its kind in English and is an invaluable contribution to the literature on Indian Philosophy. Sri Ramakrishna's saying that all religions lead to the same goal is to-day accepted by many due to an instinctive liking for the catholicity of that conception or due to the belief in the existence of saints and seers in all the great religions of the world. That this great saying is not merely a matter of faith or acceptable only on pragmatic grounds, but has deep metaphysical implications and logical justifications is the thesis of the learned Professor's contribution offered as a tribute of respect to Sri Ramakrishna on the occasion of his Birth-Centenary.]

SRI Ramakrishna Paramahansa used to teach people by simple epigrams of concentrated wisdom. One of these pithy teachings reflects the central principle for which he stood. It is—"Yata mat tata path." (Bengali) It means: As many views, so many paths.

None of his teachings requires greater emphasis than this at the present hour when India is passing through a state of communal jealousies and religious strifes. Almost all these quarrels and clashes are due to a lack of sympathy for the viewpoints of others and the refusal to respect the views of others as much as one's own. Fanaticism is inspired by the belief that one's own view is the only possible view and should be preserved at all cost. But this positive side of fanaticism is not so objectionable and dangerous, as its

negative side. For in this latter aspect fanaticism is inspired by the faith that as truth is one and one's own view is the only truth, all other views must be wrong and are, therefore, fit to be treated with contempt and, if possible, should be stamped out of existence. Contempt, persecution, quarrel and riot are the natural consequences of such an attitude. The Paramahansa would have us respect the views of others as our own views, for, he holds that there are as many paths to religious progress as there are different points of view.

But if truth is one, how can we justify different views of the same truth, and how can we, then, justify the different paths? Is not the teaching of the Paramahansa based on a faulty logic? Is not one justified in stamping out untruth in the cause of truth, unwary of the consequen-

ees? We shall try to answer these questions here as briefly as possible and examine the soundness of the teaching—"As many views, so many paths."

The dictum "Truth is one" is glibly uttered and readily believed even by common people. But it is doubtful if the meaning and implications of it are always understood as clearly. The word truth is used in different senses and there is always the risk of ambiguity when we use it. It means, first of all, the quality of a proposition which is believed and is uncontradicted and which is, therefore, true. It is in this abstract sense that we speak of the truth (as opposed to the falsity) of a statement, theory, doctrine, view, etc. Secondly, it is used in a more concrete sense to signify that which is true. In this sense, we speak of a proposition—a theory, a view, a law of nature, etc., as a *truth*. It is in this sense, again, that we say—'Speak the truth.' Thirdly, truth is used in a still more concrete sense to signify something the proposition about (the existence of) which is true. In the first sense truth is the quality of a proposition about reality, in the second it stands for that proposition about reality and in the third it is reality itself. It is in this last sense that truth is used to mean a fact, an event, etc., when we say, for example, that gravitation is a truth or that the death of Socrates is a truth. When God is spoken of as truth, this third sense is illustrated (if, of course, God is believed to be a concrete reality).

Distinguishing these three senses we may turn back to the question, "What is exactly the sense in which

we use the word truth, when we say—"Truth is one"?"

If 'truth' is taken in the first sense, then the dictum can mean that the connotation of truth is the same everywhere. Truth is one, in so far as it carries the same meaning wherever the word is applied. For example, different propositions like "The Sun is stationary," "The moon is a satellite," "The three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles", contain truth in so far as all of them possess the same quality, say, of being believed and uncontradicted. But such a view is too cold to supply any basis for religious emotion, far less for fanatical enthusiasm. This does not preclude the possibility of there being different points of view and different theories regarding the same problem—because different propositions can contain the same quality, truth, being equally believed and uncontradicted.

If truth is taken in the second sense, namely, as identical with a proposition that is true, then it is difficult to see how truth can be said to be one. There would be as many truths as there are propositions that are true. But it may be said that the dictum, in this sense of truth, might mean that there can be only one truth (i.e. true proposition) regarding any particular matter. It may be pointed out as an example that with regard to the question, "What is the colour of milk?" only one true position, namely, "The colour of milk is white" can be held and therefore, there is only one truth regarding this matter. Similarly regarding any other question, namely, the existence of God or the nature of God, etc., there can only be one truth or true reply. It is mostly in this

sense that truth is usually held to be one. Let us consider it minutely.

It is scarcely realised that when we ask an apparently simple question like "What is the colour of milk?" there are so many other things presupposed and understood without which no reply would be possible. A simple question conceals many other questions and an apparently simple reply would be true only subject to so many different conditions which are tacitly understood from the universe of discourse. To answer the above question one should understand from what point of view it has been asked. The colour of milk would appear to be of one shade during sunlight, of another during moonlight, it would appear to be yellow to the jaundiced and something else to the unjaundiced, it would appear to be something to a man with coloured spectacles, something else to others. In a word, distance, medium, nature of the organs, quantity of the milk, consistency of the milk, composition of it and many other facts, too many to be mentioned, will determine the nature of the reply to an apparently simple but really vague question like "What is the colour of milk?" Similarly the reply to the question, "What is the shape of a pie?" will depend upon the angle of vision from which it is observed. It may appear round, elliptical, etc., from different points of view. To say, then, that there must be only one truth, i.e., true proposition regarding any matter is to ignore these logical difficulties. Almost every simple question turns out to be vague and indeterminate and calls for further and further qualification and determination, before any definite reply can be given.

In everyday life we ask vague questions and are satisfied with equally indefinite replies. Or it may be that the universe of discourse, though theoretically inexhaustible, is tacitly understood and questions and answers derive their significance from such understanding. Again in some cases though the conditions that make the question intelligible and answerable are not mentioned, they are understood to be normal conditions. With regard to our question, "What is the colour of milk?" we assume before we reply that the question means, "What is the colour of milk under normal conditions?"

But there are questions, and religious questions are the most important of this kind, where we may lack a common universe of discourse, that is to say, the universe of ideas forming the back-ground of our questions and answers is not the same in all persons. There is consequently no fixed 'normal' or 'average'. In such cases, it would be doubly rash to assert that there can only be one truth or true opinion regarding a question. A question like "Does God exist?" cannot be answered, for example, by one simple affirmative or negative proposition. Because the reply would depend upon the meanings which 'God' and 'exist' bear in the question? Does 'God' mean a person or an impersonal being, a concrete reality or an abstract law, an ideal or an actuality? Again what is the meaning of 'exist'? Does it mean 'in space and time' or 'is any fact', etc. There are persons, who would demand the existence of God in space and time, like so many other objects of nature, and crave for a *darsana* or sensuous perception of God. There

are others who are satisfied to believe in God as an ideal which is struggling for perfection, but not yet fully perfected. It is impossible, therefore, to assert honestly that there can only be one true reply to an indefinite question like 'Does God exist?' There is, therefore, room for many replies to such important and vague questions, and the dictum 'Truth is one,' can scarcely brush aside the possibility of different views.

Understanding truth in the third sense, namely, as identical with reality, the dictum would come to mean that Reality is one. Conceding to the monist, for argument's sake, that Reality is one, we are not necessarily compelled to the view that conception of that Reality must also be one. If a simple thing like a piece present so many different aspects to different observers occupying different points of view, it is very unlikely that the one Reality, which by supposition, is the basis of so many divergent appearances, should present the same view to all. Room for divergent opinions is, therefore, ample.

From all that we have said above, it would follow that in whatever sense the word truth is taken, the dictum, 'Truth is one' cannot affect the possibility of different views

about the same truth or reality. If we take into consideration, the divergent physical and mental compositions of men, their different traditions, cultures, education, etc., it is only natural to expect that they will come to look at spiritual problems from different angles of vision. Differences would, therefore, exist very naturally among their views. If, again, man must tread the path of spiritual progress according to his own light, divergent paths would be the logical outcome.

It is a pity that a person's enthusiasm for his own view, which should be conserved and utilised fully for his own progress, deviates into the destructive path of forcing others to accept a view which is not theirs. If every man is an end in himself, he cannot be used as a means. Full freedom, therefore, is due to him in his spiritual and religious pursuits. Every person should have full freedom to chalk out and tread his spiritual path unhampered by coercion.

In celebrating the Birth-Centenary of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, we can do something more than a mere lip service, if we hark back to his simple teaching : As many views, so many paths. Herein lies our hope of unity among the fighting sects and communities of India.

MY MASTER'S VOICE

By Prof. Ernest P. Horowitz

[Prof. Ernest P. Horowitz of Hunter College, New York, is an authority in world-literature and Aryan semasiology. Sometime back he had lectured on these subjects in the Bombay, Nagpur and Rangoon Universities. He is a disciple of Swami Vivekananda and an ardent admirer of Indian spiritual ideals. In the present article, written as a tribute to the memory of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, Prof. Horowitz touches upon various spiritual and cultural ideals of great importance.]

NAGNAJITS, sky-clad like triumphant aurora, are valiant knights of the spirit, ever extinguishing the flames of flesh and roving fancy. Orthodoxy and ritual is a preparatory stage of spiritual unfoldment; Nagnajits ignore the one and reject the other, yet condone and even encourage either. Ceremonial observances and time-hallowed symbolism lead to the inner sanctuary which no imagery adorns. In a state of self-oblivion and self-abandonment, reality (Sat) rules supreme; for the time being vanity fair (Prapancha) is shattered and scattered. No ordained Brahmin ever consecrates a self-illuminated Nagnajit. By a bold sweep of vision, Totapuri, the naked one, dispensed with the intercession of intermediary powers, that glorious progeny of faith, from mother Kali downward to the home-befriending 'lares and penates.' Young Rama-krishna in whom he engendered direct Advaita cognition had long envisaged with the "eye of truth" (dharma-chakshus) the noumenon within phenomena. In his eager search for "essence in semblance" (Sat in Asat), the god-intoxicated youth roused slumbering Deity in indolent nature; he was given power to identify the Infinite with the cosmic egg or matrix of the universe—Brahman with Kali. The Divine Mother had tutored him in sacrificial

love and social service, while caste-pride draws arbitrary and artificial divisions between the untouchable and the twice-born (Harijan and Dwi-jas). The master knew of no such cruel distinction. In his secluded nest he sensed the unity of all men; he could touch their hearts, and change their thoughts, by merely touching their body. Six years ago, the writer of these lines visited the Panchavati. Alas! the sacred spot was already desecrated to a noisy market-place. Pedlars haggled, pilgrims purchased, quarrelsome women shouted. Foul odors of fried fish tainted the fragrant garden-grove which once was a Deva-sadanam, sheltering the holy and lowly lad of Dakshineshwar. East and West are interlocked for evil and for good; they share in the same vices and virtues. Social justice is the very breath of the gospels, but the church, supported by profiteers and industrial vultures, has turned capitalistic. If the Saviour entered the sanctuary, he would drive out again munition-makers and other birds of prey.

Before reaching his teens, Rama-krishna walked in the fields one day. The sky was clear and blue, when the boy saw a flight of cranes circle along the horizon. The contrast of colour dazzled and bewitched his imagination. The enraptured youth fell in a profound and ravishing

trance; he caught never-forgotten glimpses of the Ever-beautiful which is also the Ever-one. Cosmic consciousness was the enchanting gift, carried back from ecstasy to normalcy. Ramakrishna fondly implanted the ingrained ideal of universal religion in his most dynamic disciple who condescended to become my guide and Guru. I casually met Vivekananda in the last century; the apparent incident turned out to be a Karmic necessity. When I first saw the Swami in London, an electric shock or magnetic thrill penetrated my inmost being, muddled and immature as it was. An inner voice said: this is the one whom you have been seeking all the days of your life! Swamiji is generally remembered as a suasive orator; to me he acted as a silent Muni. My complex idiosyncracy could not be changed, but the bewildered garden of my soul was somewhat weeded. Vivekananda moulded and directed the subtle Samskaras or mood-imprints, deep-rooted in the psychic subsoil, even as a careful gardener tenderly watches over some frail flower. Subconscious wrinkles were smoothed and straightened out; I borrowed tint after tint from his grandeur. Whatever faults Swamiji had, are multiplied in me a hundredfold. Nature is rebellious; conversion becomes a lifelong agony, a sting and stigma, a heart-burn and humiliation. Backsliding and resurgence alternate in a vicious ring, but Vivekananda revived and my sinking self. His explosive personality has proved a healthful tonic and medicine to nobler natures than mine. Rolland faithfully chronicled the lives of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda; "*la vie de Ramakrishna*" is the more eloquent and convincing

biography. Gandhiji's Harijan campaign, perhaps the crowning piece of his eventful career, is a warm response to Vivekananda's lovable universalism. Yet neither Rolland nor Gandhi ever heard my Master's compelling voice; they never drank the nectar from his tuneful lips. O, for the touch of a vanished hand, and the sound of a voice that is still!

Versatility of vision, a free, unhindered outlook all around, puts provincial prejudice and narrow nationalism to shame. Vivekananda, vivifying his Master's mighty message, dovetailed Adwaita's ringing trumpet-call with Western aspirations and cultural vibrations. Herd-instincts sway the tribal psychology of mankind; it is a risky and even dangerous game to unsettle traditional beliefs. Swamiji held strong views on politics which in the end are determined by economies, but as a rule kept aloof from heated controversy on public affairs, either domestic or international. He keenly analysed the subtle springs of family and race pride, and clearly showed the damage done to human relationships by preconceived theories or rash conclusions. Race and religion ever were the apple of deadly discord or foolish dissension. Caste pride gives a superiority-complex, and intensifies aggressive nationalism with its sinister schemes of territorial aggrandizement. It is quite true that industrial States, overpopulated and underfed, need colonial possessions; they must expand or else explode. But expansionism and race-discrimination are sore trouble-makers, ravenous wolves, walking about in sheep's clothes of fervent patriotism! Dictators put up a smoke-screen, and let mob-passions loose on minority-

groups in a regimented state. Followers of Neo-Vedanta have a sane regard for every caste, creed and colour in an increasingly congested world. Their only God is Love, redeemer of the finite which sooner or later is to realise its infinitude. In the pre-designed plan of redemption, human nature is contacted with the Supreme Reality which hovers over visible manifestations, as an artist's creative genius over his masterwork. Atma alone is real; the Supreme Self, the old man of the mountains, is cosmic, impersonal, non-attached and unconcerned. Atma-bodhi or self-realisation is the ripest fruit of self-search and Nature-study; religion and science are two red roses, grown on the same Bodhi-bush. Cognition's dawn and sundown make a perfect day. Buoyant faith (Deva-darshanam) sees all things clearly in the glad gleam of morning. Knowledge grows; wisdom lingers. Grey theory falls behind experiment. Scepticism is Yama-darshanam, a fading light with lengthening shadows, chilly and dull. Science searches for laws which govern Nature; religion perceives the permanent in the personal. Ultimately science and religion intertwine in a higher unity; "being" (Sat) is a dynamic Deity, the god of evolution. The world-old pages of the Atharva Veda re-echo Nature-magic which, in the age of reason, matured to natural science. Medicine-men developed to medical practitioners, alchemy was transmuted to chemistry, and star-lore to astronomy. Vivekananda never stooped to ignoble magic, but ever gripped eternal values, the sound realities of soul and sense.

Vedanta is vast as the boundless ocean, and immeasurable as the infinite skies. Vivekananda dreaded organisation*. Limited societies, religious sects, admirably suit the lower middle classes which never experience personal salvation, yet fondly imagine that they alone possess the faith. Their comfortable bourgeois-creed silently sanctions pleasure-seeking and money-making. But organisation is altogether unfit for the giant-limbs of heroic Adwaita. If the preaching of Vedanta is done depending on the funds contributed by liberal donors and generous patrons, forfeited is inner independence, the heart-blood of Vedanta! True teachers are heaven-born, and tower high above the wrangling schools. Vivekananda was indifferent to Christian Science, but approved of Mrs. Eddy's statement that "our Master lost no time in organisation; if his disciples founded a Church, they erred." Suchlike words occur in the first edition of "Science and Health," but were carefully erased and deleted from all successive reprints. Vivekananda reluctantly lent his name to the new Vedanta Society which he regarded as a form of faith, reflecting rather than embodying life and truth.

*Lest the statement should be misunderstood, we have to remark that what the Swami warned against is the tendency of the organisation to swallow the individual and his freedom. It is good to be born in a church but not to die in it—this was one of his favourite sayings. He recognised, however, that organisation is absolutely necessary to achieve anything in this world. Refer to his letter, Complete Works, Vol IV, Pp. 266 (2nd Edition)—"Organisation has its faults, no doubt, but without that nothing can be done." It was in this conviction that he founded the organisation that bears his Master's name. To help an individual and not to crush or enslave him is the object of a truly spiritual organisation.—Editors.

When the two congeal into historic facts, life develops and "disintegrates"; truth flourishes and fades.

II

Modern youth dislikes to look at world problems through tradition-coloured glasses, and prefers to face the essentials of culture and the hard facts of law-abiding Nature. It is profitable to learn from a beloved Acharya, how giants of the past would confront present-day crisis and catastrophes if they happened to live in the mechanised age of cinemas and radios, dirigibles and tractors. Herodotus and Shankara, Euripides and Bhavabhuti, Dante and Shakespeare, Calderon and Camoens, Descartes and Kant, Voltaire and Goethe, all were masters of their daring craft, titans of thought and world-citizens of universal breadth. Literature is a blazing torch. Productive poetry and gems of wisdom, enshrined in that priceless casket, enkindle in growing souls a holy enthusiasm for the heroic life, and engender lofty conceptions and sublime sentiments. Inborn idealism is fed; the force of literary judgment is strengthened. Our loose thinking sadly lacks logic. Critical acumen, applied to literature, say, to the Great Epic, enhances rather than mars its superb poetic beauty. The old national ballads, strung together by the magic of minstrelsy, are still fresh and fragrant like a vernal bed of crocuses and daffodils, though the state of society, depicted in the Mahabharata, has long vanished. The heroic age ended with the defeat and destruction of the Kauravas.

Ephemeral literature with very few exceptions is worthless trash, morbid, sentimental, depressing. It was always so. Classics alone make whole-

some reading: they gladden, uplift and release our better nature. The world-classics offer real and lasting values; they catch the ideal and eternal in the chequered experiences of actual life. On the stage of the world, truth (Sat) struts about in an actor's flimsy finery. We are the mummers in the mundane masquerade, and ignorantly tide or belittle the soul's eternal light. It is so easy to forget truth and ourselves, not so Kalidasa; he "recognised" reality everywhere in the earthly tragic-comedy. His sweet pastoral romance, enriched by the supernatural, bears the sub-title "Recognition." The illustrious recognitionist revelled in the exuberance of beauty, and enjoyed to the fullest heroic, girlish and scenic loveliness. But the Divine Mother had taught him to fall in love with transient beauties from a truer and more tranquil heart's angle of vision. The poet became a devoted "servant" (Dasa) of mother Kal. Culture does not always keep pace with technique and machinery; we are in danger of losing the throb and thrill and higher spark of Kalidasa and his German affinity, Goethe. The two classics, towering summits of Indo-German genius, are the best antidote to counteract the poison exhaled by our commercialised literature, boring and base, and only too often foul and filthy.

III

My destiny demanded a dictator and disposer. Vivekananda, sent by fate, quickened my dormant trend toward cosmopolitan culture. I was to be a teacher of world-literature and Aryan Semasiology.

My New York classes are consecrated to the princes of poetry. Little heed is given to biographical and

technical details, but all the more attention is paid to the message of the masters, and its bearing on modern thought and conduct. Again the biology of words is the bedrock and background of all culture. For 35 years, on and off, I have been busy on Aryan Semasiology; the dictionary will be ready in another five years. Maybe, some institute or Government, in sympathy with the idea, will undertake the publication.

Science disciplines the untutored judgment, but a liberal education humanises. The Victorian training of young gentlemen included the classical humanities which by 1940 or 1950, will have run their course, and grown stale, and be outmoded. The vacated place is to be taken by world-literature and the "romance of words". Dry-as-dust grammar, dead Greek and dull Latin already cease to be popular. The New Learning makes light of erudition, but cultivates soul-force (Shakti).

In 1929 Bombay University invited me to rationalise Aryan Linguistics by Western critical methods. The Universities of Nagpur, Alighar and Rangoon asked me to repeat the semasiological course. In the following year I was appointed Government of Bombay Research Scholar. Various Colleges use as a text-book my lectures on Indo-Iranian Philology, published by the Cama Institute (Bombay, 1929). A second enlarged edition is in preparation. Generally, the definition of terms, in every branch of knowledge, is theoretical rather than linguistic. The New Philology strips cultural words to their very root and elements, and films their historic development so to speak. Science and art, travel and trade, logic and law, social and poli-

tical ethics, religion and metaphysics, all of them are given a semasiological setting and foundation.

Before 1000 B.C. semantic vocabularies were in use in Vedic schools of thought. These glossaries disentangle the intricacies of names which even then had become obsolete, hoary and knotted, as it were. The Sanskrit word for "gloss," Nighantu, is derived from Grantha, and signifies "unknotting," that is, unraveling Mantra-tantra, the thread and tissue of obscure and complex vocabularies. In the fifth century B.C., Yaska was the leading Nairuktika or Semasiologist. His penetrating analysis untied riddling word-knots, and solved linguistic enigmas, even as Rama-krishna, by the mere touch of his foot, loosened heart-attachments. The two titans of vision were both Nirgranthas, unfettered by the trammels of the glib tongue's rigmarole and the bondage of Kama-kanchana. Words, Sphota-endowed, ascend the vast organ-scale of emotions from crude Arctic origins and rude cave-instincts, up the cosmic tone-ladder to the self-essulence of a Vahnik and Vivekananda, or a Gibbon and Browning. The two English super-patriots were familiar with the world-classics, professed creedless universalism, and would have welcomed a semantic guide-book in their antiquarian investigations. In a little-noticed footnote, the immortal anarchist of Rome's decline and fall commends semasiology for a better understanding of the organic growth of public institutions.

Sanskrit Semasiology is still a desideratum to students of Hindu culture. Dharma and Nasatya may serve as a test-lesson. The verb Dhri (hold) yields the three nouns: Dhar-

ma (holding on to the moral law; obligation; duty; justice), Dharana (holding Chitta or the brain to one thought only or bending the mind to one object to the exclusion of all others) and Dharani (holding down disease; magical incantation to assuage evil spirits). Mahayana and Shaivametrical charms; such Dharanis have passed wholesale into Tibetan Lamaism. European kindred of Dhara-na are "throne" (a hold or support) and "firm" (holding fast), the former of Greek, and the latter of Latin parentage.*

When the Bhaktas, followers of Narayana, still dwelt in the uttermost north (Shweta-dwipa), they saw the Arctic twilight dance merrily round Meru's polar heights like

[*An English repercussion is 'dare' (hold on boldly). The transition of 'dh' to 'd' occurs in Sanskrit 'dha' (set) and English 'do' (set to work), with the classical reflections the-sis (a task set) and sa-et (an act done). Russians, like the ancient Romans, pronounce Greek 'th' (Sanskrit 'dh') like 'f'; Theodore like Fedor.

All these are phonetic changes, but the evolution of sound is subordinate in interest to the life-side of language. What we want to know is the historic process how root-conceptions like 'hold' or 'set' have burst into fuller meaning and blossomed into richer significance (dare and do; firm and fast). Semasiology is the queen of philology, and forms part of Nature-study. Orderly Nature, the cosmic organism, consists of names and forms (Nama-rupa) with corresponding laws of development. Tulip-beds, thickly rooted and ramified in the dark cold earth, grow into tender, slender shoots with fairy buds. The floral profusion, rainbow-tinted, wind-tossed and sun-kissed, no longer clings to the clammy heavy sod; scented and dainty heads nod gracefully to the four quarters of the azure sky. Our etymological dictionaries are antiquated; they must be vitalised and rewritten by biologists.]

heavenly twins. The Rig Veda calls them "dancing heroes" (Naranritu; 6, 63, 5) and also Ashwins, i.e., the two horsemen or joint-riders. Punters explain "Nasatya," an epithet applied to the Ashwins, as Na-asatya (not untruthful), or else derive Nasatya from Nasate, variously translated as "joins, returns, recovers." But the epithet is of Sumerian origin, and denotes "guardian of the midnight sun." The early Anglo-Saxons were divided into ingle-priests and sax-men or swordsmen; or to speak Sanskrit, into Brahmins and Kshatriyas. Ingleside means fireside; the ancient English were fire-devotees like the Parsis, that choice minority-group and civic ornament to the progressive city of Bombay. The ruling class of Sumer likewise comprised sun-wardens (Nasati) and swordsmen (Amuru); Hittites and Mitrites. The former name survives in Sanskrit Atithi (guest); Amuru is the source-word of the martial Maruts, cuirassed attendants of war-like Indra. In the circumpolar nest of the Proto-Aryans, including the Sumerian ancestry, the mythological function of the Nasatya-twins (Sanskritised from Nasati) was to bear the dying winter-sun or waning Northern Light through the big pond (winter solstice) into the New year. Nahusha (sunset) was fabled to ferry Nakshatra which in Vedic Sanskrit still means "sun" across the underworld-waters to golden Aurora's Easter resurrection. Awe-struck, the ghostly ferryman looks back, and reviews the ghastly battle ground, soaked with the blood of sunset-red.

The field is quiet, the severed war is past!

Within their purple tents the victors rest,

Save where a silver-cuirassed sentinel.

Leans on his spear, and gazes down the west.

Nahusha, an antediluvian giant, usurped the throne of India. His affinities in the Old Testament seem to be Noah and the Noachids. Hebrew Noah signifies "sundown, rest," and is apparently a Sumerian loan word.

On the last day of his rich life, Vivekananda's sunray-genius was attracted to knotted philological problems which long ago had challenged the sagacity of Yaska and Panini. My dying Master heard the eternal rush and rhythm of Sphota, but no

longer garbed in articulate wording. His spirit ever lives among us, in every Math and Mission, and pleads with the societies which use his venerable name to claim the salient peaks of world-poetry, and delve deep into the romance of words. Truth through beauty and culture! Sat and Asat are interdependent and inseparable like Brahma and Kali. May the Divine Mother bless our Vedanta schools and every Adwaita endeavour!

Om Ramakrishnaya Namah Om!
Pranjalir anato 'smi Vivekanandam!

THEN AND NOW

By E. T. Sturdy.

[Mr. Sturdy is a student of Indian Philosophy, and has also spent some time in the Himalayas practising spiritual disciplines. It was he who invited Swami Vivekananda to England and arranged for his lectures. He is now very old, yet, he takes a keen interest in the Vedanta movement that has been revived by Swami Avyaktananda in London. Mr. Sturdy is the President of the Committee formed for celebrating Sri Ramakrishna's Birth-Centenary in England.

His brief reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda and his views regarding the prospects of Vedanta in the West at present provide very stimulating reading.]

THAT was in 1895 that I met Swami Vivekananda: a very memorable date in my life. I had previously been with two of his Gurubhais (fellow-disciples) in India, viz., Swamis Sivananda and Satchidananda.* I think, probably, I wrote Vivekananda before he left America, but that is now 40 years ago. Be that as it may, I saw before me a man robust and upright of body with a dignified presence, calm features and luminous eyes, when he stepped from the train.

I soon realised that he had a very wide range of understanding and

sympathy with all grades of life, Western and Eastern, and that he was a uniting force and not a disruptive one. He could be outspoken and severe with the shortcomings of both East and West, and I heard him speak very pointedly and candidly to people, who, without direct experience themselves, repeated the stock prejudices about Indian schools of thought and Indian life. He also exhorted young Indians who visited him to hold fast and remain faithful to what was good in their own culture and not be carried away by the materialistic glamour of the West.

The Swami himself was not exempt from all the blandishments, subtle

* Swami Satchidananda was a disciple and not a fellow-disciple of Swami Vivekananda.—Editors.

and gross, which were poured out upon him. He was no ascetic in the ordinary sense of the term. He met Western life with a cheerful acquiescence in what was going, but it left him as it found him, always true to himself. People who could not fathom his largeness of heart and mind criticised him as self-indulgent, but it was not so; he had a perfect control of himself, both in body and mind.

At this point one must not omit to mention J.J. Goodwin. He was a young journalist who had gone out to America. He was sent to make a shorthand report of one of the Swami's addresses for some journal. From that time he was so attracted to the Swami that he never left him, made himself his constant attendant, took down his lectures in shorthand and devoted all his time to him beyond that in which he had to go and earn a bare living for himself. We owe him a great debt of gratitude, for without him we should have the barest, if any, record of what the Swami taught. When the news was brought to him of Goodwin's death in Madras he was in the Himalayas. He remained silent for a long time gazing out upon the distant peaks. Then he said, "The last words that I shall speak have been recorded," or words to that effect, and he thereby also inferred his early departure.

We started off in London with an address at the then Prince's Hall in Piccadilly: there were about 300 people present and a favourable notice appeared in several papers. Afterwards lectures were organised and a

room was taken at which the attendance used to be about 120. Besides these lectures, he accepted many invitations to private houses and met many prominent people.

There is no doubt that the activities of Madame Blavatsky and the Theosophical Society had done much to prepare the ground and to stir thoughtful minds to listen to a genuine Eastern teacher, and at that time there seemed much more spirit of enquiry than ever since. Whatever the cause, upon Vivekananda's return to India for the second time, interest in the work he had started here flagged and those Swamis who followed him were unable to sustain it. It is difficult to light damp straw or to keep it burning when lighted. Yet it is difficult to judge. Many more books are brought out and read by a widespread public dealing with Eastern thought now, than in those earlier days. Some Eastern tenets like *punarjanma*, *karma*, *rasanas*, etc., have become familiar to people, whereas in the days of my youth such ideas or references were quite unheard of and would have evoked astonishment and ridicule. Forty years ago the psychic atmosphere was calmer, people's minds were then not so much occupied with wars and rumours of wars. With ever quickening inter-communication the influence of East and West upon one another is bound to increase, and although the fifty years that Schopenhauer foretold have been now far exceeded, perhaps 150 years may see Eastern thought familiarised and universal here.

THE HOLY MOTHER

By Mrs. S. Muthulakshmi Reddi, M.B. & C.M.

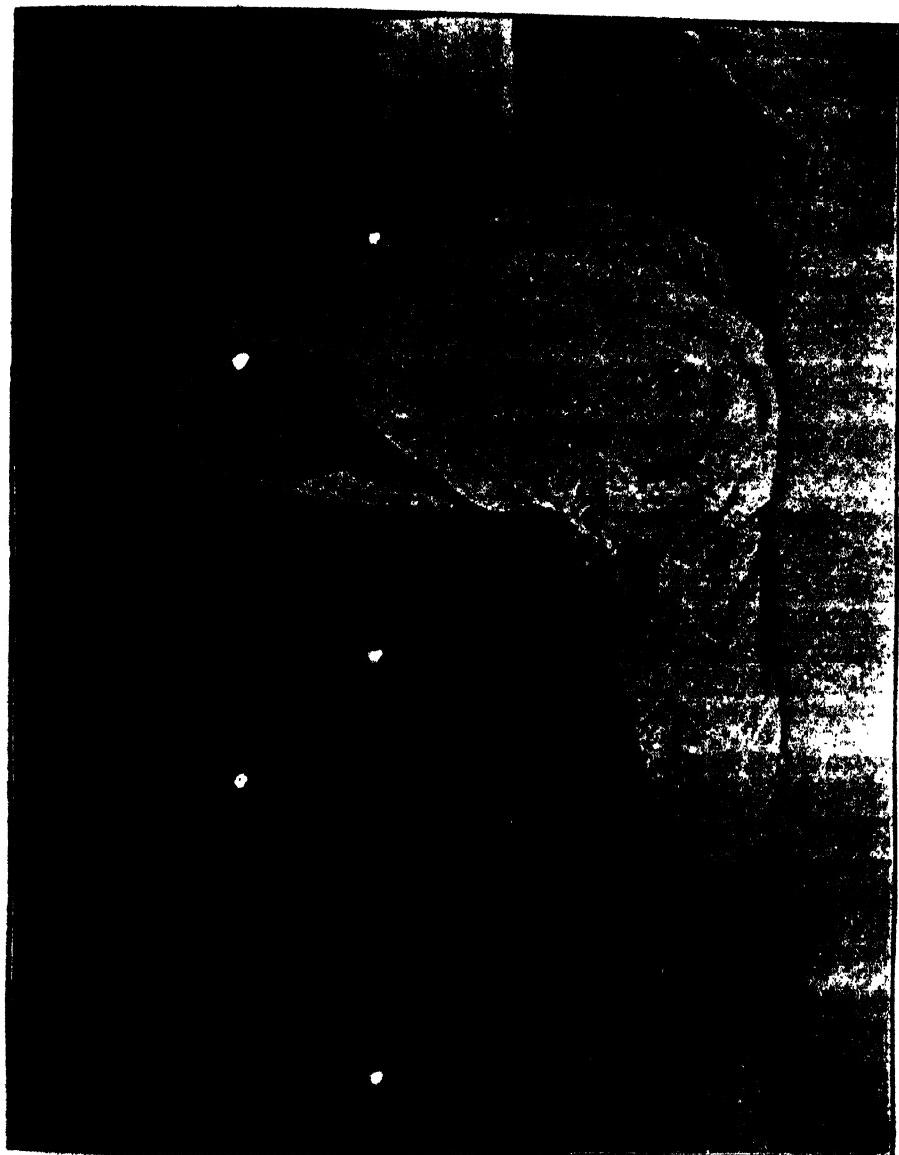
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(Mrs. Reddi is one of the pioneers of the Women's Movement in India. In this capacity and as the first lady to be the Deputy President of a legislative body in this country, she enjoys an All-India reputation. Her life is devoted to social service, especially to the education and upliftment of women. In the following instructive article she gives a somewhat detailed account of the life, personality and teachings of the Holy Mother who is an embodiment of the highest ideals of Indian womanhood and forms an integral part of Sri Ramakrishna's divine life. Her life is not as widely known as it ought to be, and we hope this article of Mrs. Reddi written with deep understanding and fervent devotion will go a great way in remedying this state of affairs.)

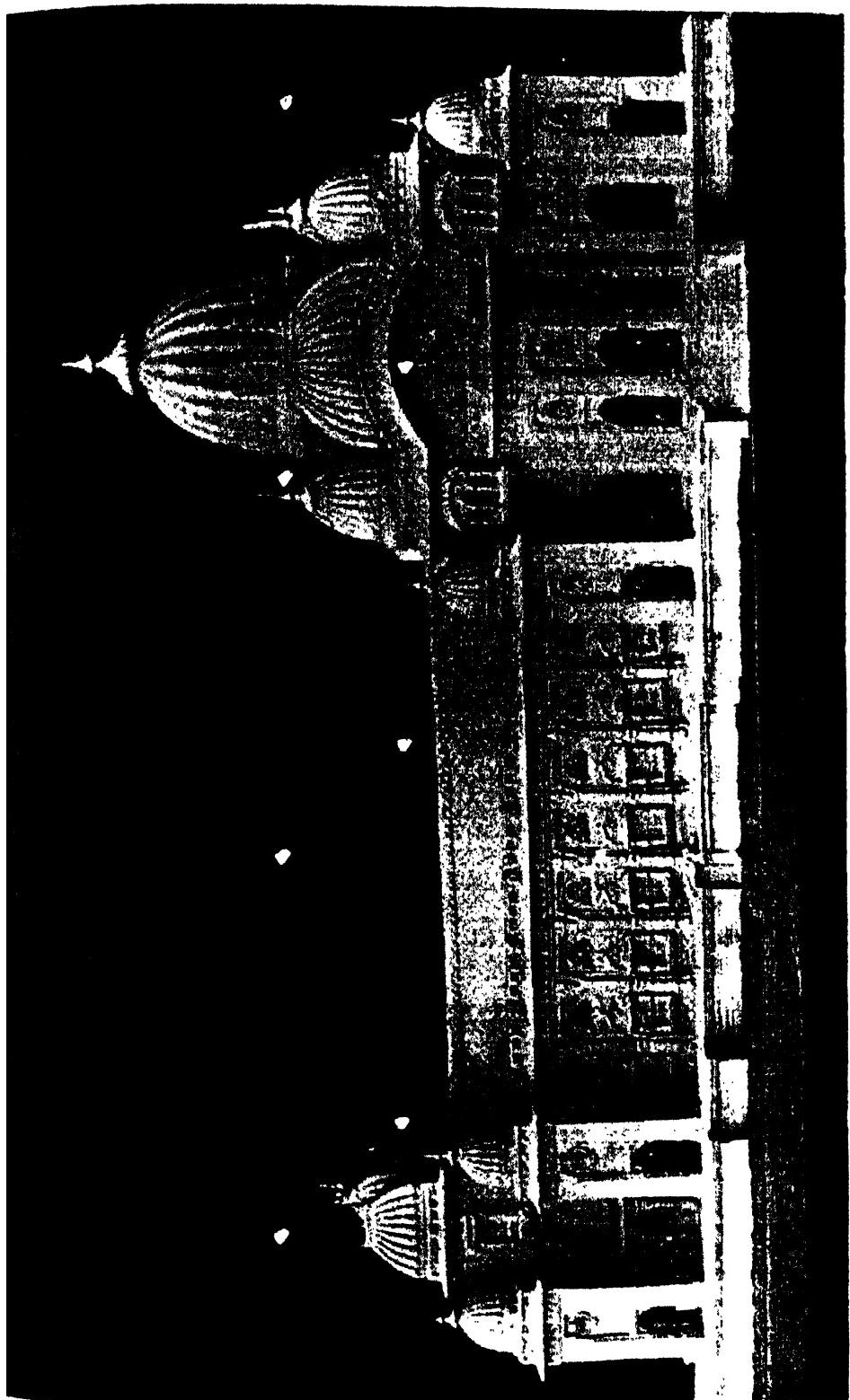
To truly depict a great and saintly life is not within the power of an ordinary individual. To describe a superhuman personality one should have had either a close association with such a spiritualised person or one should have had oneself a glimpse at least of those divine powers. I do not lay any claim to have had either of these. Yet being asked by the authorities of Sri Ramakrishna Math of Madras just to put down in writing my ideas about the Holy Mother whom I consider to be an embodiment of the best in Aryan womanhood, I begin this sacred task with great diffidence, and I pray that this humble attempt of mine may not be a failure.

The Holy Mother—her maiden name was Sarada—was born in 1853 of poor Brahmin parents in an obscure village named Jayrambati, in the district of Bankura in Bengal, and bred in that simple rural atmosphere, was married at the early age of five to Sri Ramakrishna who was then in his 24th year. Sri Ramakrishna was then practising 'Sadhana' and was subjecting himself to severe austerities and stern spiritual discipline, and it was in order to divert his mind from its spiritual flights that his mother and brother planned the marriage.

But in this respect the marriage was a failure; for the partner with whom he was united in wedlock was well-matched with him in point of spiritual greatness. Except for once at the age of seven, Saradamani Devi never met her saintly husband after the marriage till she was in her fourteenth year. This meeting took place at Kamarpukur, the village home of Sri Ramakrishna whither he had gone for a short visit after an absence of seven years. In the meantime Sri Ramakrishna had passed through various spiritual disciplines and developed into a great saint, but this did not in any way make him neglect his duty to his wife. Besides, his Guru Totapuri had told him on knowing him to be married that he alone is truly established in Brahman whose dispassion, discrimination and wisdom are not in any way impaired even in the company of his wife. So out of his sense of duty to his wife and desiring to put himself to this test and fiery ordeal, he received Saradamani Devi cordially and undertook to teach his young and innocent wife all details of the practical life of the world as well as the profound secrets of spiritual discipline. He set himself whole heartedly to this task and taught her



The Major Milt



St. Peter's Square, Rome, Italy
Photograph by James M. Flanagan

not only her household duties, but also the way of cultivating absolute faith and self-surrender to God and of behaving correctly with all persons under all circumstances and in all conditions and stations of life".

The Holy Mother herself talked to her disciples in later days of her early training by her husband. She used to say how Sri Ramakrishna was so careful about even trifling detail that he instructed her: "When you get into a carriage or boat, get in first, but when you get down, get down last after seeing if anything is left behind". After five or six months' stay in Kamarpukur, Sri Ramakrishna returned to Dakshineswar by himself. Saradamani Devi also returned to her father but filled with that joy and contentment born of true love for her divine husband. She had lived with him, had served him and had tasted his love and affection for her. She had learnt her lessons from him—how to live a clean and pure and godly life, and how to make others happy. A Hindu wife, brought from her infancy to respect, love and revere her husband as God himself, is indeed a blessed and a happy woman, when she experiences a similar love and respect for herself from one whom she considers to be the highest and holiest for her here and hereafter. So it was with Saradamani Devi.

In later days, she often spoke of this, her great happiness to the women disciples of her husband, "Since then," she would say, "I always felt as if a pitcher filled with bliss had been installed in my heart. I cannot tell you how full I felt of that calm, steady and divine joy". This is pure divine love indeed.

Saradamani Devi passed a few more years away from her husband in her father's house, self-absorbed and content with the barest necessities. But though her body lived there, her mind dwelt ever with her husband at Dakshineswar. Even though she felt a strong desire to go and see him, she suppressed it carefully and patiently, consoling herself with the hope that he himself would call her to his side as is the usual Hindu custom. But different rumours about the mental condition of her husband began to reach her when she had completed her 18th year. She therefore became anxious to see him once, and it need be to stay with him and nurse him. Accompanied by her father she left for Calcutta, situated 70 or 80 miles from her village, and reached that place with her health pulled down by a bad fever which she contracted on the way.

When Sri Ramakrishna saw her thin and emaciated, he became concerned very much about her welfare. He made arrangements for her lodgings in his own town and minded her and supervised her diet and medicine. In two or three days she recovered, whereupon her father finding that Sri Ramakrishna had welcomed her returned to his village quite satisfied.

Thus the Holy Mother was now again under the influence and instruction of her divine husband. Her coming at first caused grave doubts in Sri Ramakrishna's mind, for, as he saw only the Divine Mother in all women, how could he regard one of them as a wife? Saradamani, however, set his fears at rest by telling that she wanted only to serve and to learn. And this she did, as faithfully and devotedly as any disciple

possibly could, during her fifteen or sixteen years of stay in the Temple. She lived in a small closely screened room in the Concert House, at first with Sri Ramakrishna's mother, and after her demise, by herself alone. "Only through one little opening could I see the outside world," she remarks, describing her life, at the Concert House, "and I would watch there all day and night just to catch one glimpse of Thakur (Sri Ramakrishna), but when he passed he would draw his cloth across his face. Thus days went by without seeing him. In course of time Gopala-ma, Yojin-ma and other lady devotees came and I was less alone.

"Every morning I used to get up at three o'clock and go for my bath in the Ganges. After my bath I would return to my little room in the Concert House and not leave it again all day. The sun never came there, so I could not dry my hair properly. The Purdha curtain round the verandah was just about the height of a man's head. All of Thakur's disciples used to come with provisions and I had to cook for them; so round the edge of the little room there were cooking vessels, bags of rice, dal, etc., and I slept in the small space in the middle." Sometime later she fell ill, and a devotee of Sri Ramakrishna, probably feeling that this was due to bad accommodation, built a small house for her near the Temple, where she stayed with Sri Ramakrishna's niece and a maid-servant.

Describing her spiritual training under Sri Ramakrishna during this period she says, "I was always so shy that when I came to him I drew my veil down to my chin. He would ask me why I veiled myself and tell

me to lift it. But I could not draw it up beyond my nose. One night, however, I remember he talked the whole night on the Lord, and I became, as it were, mad. When dawn broke I found myself standing before him with my veil thrown entirely back from my face and lost in what he was saying. The daylight suddenly recalled me to myself. I drew my veil quickly and ran to the Concert House.

"Once I asked Thakur with what name I should make Japam. He looked up at me so searchingly that I was frightened and blushed. He replied: 'Take any name you like. Only believe that all power lies in the name you choose and it will surely save you.'

"At that time, at Dakshineswar, I used to get up at 3 o'clock in the morning and sit for meditation. I would be totally lost in meditation. Once, in a moonlit night, I was performing my Japam near the steps of the Nahabat (Concert Room). Everything was quiet. I did not know even when Sri Ramakrishna passed that way to answer the call of nature. On other occasions, I would hear the sound of his shoes, but on this one I was totally absorbed in meditation. At that time I looked differently. I had ornaments and a cloth with a red border. The wind had made the cloth slip from my body. I was unconscious of it. Young Jogi came there to give the water-pug to Sri Ramakrishna and saw me in that condition. Ah! the ecstasy of those days! On a moonlit night I would look at the moon and pray with folded hands, 'May my heart be as pure as the rays of yonder moon.' If you are steady in meditation and prayer, you will clearly see Sri Rama-

krishna in your heart, and hear his voice. The moment an idea flashes in your mind, it will be fulfilled then and there. You will be bathed in peace. Ah! what a mind I had at that time. Brinde (the maid-servant) one day dropped a metal plate in front of me, with a bang. The sound penetrated into my heart. I was then meditating in the Nahabat and felt the sound like a clap of thunder, and she burst into tears... In the course of your spiritual realisation you will find that he who resides in my heart exists in your heart as well. He is in the heart of everyone

the oppressed, the persecuted, the untouchable and the outcast. This realisation makes one truly humble. What shall I say about my sister-in-law? One day some sweepers came to our house at Jayarambati and brought a straw-ring for supporting the water-jar on the ground. I asked the man with the ring to leave it outside. With great caution he left it there, but my sister-in-law created a fuss and said, 'The sweeper has touched other things. Throw them away!' and she began to abuse him saying, 'You are all outcasts and you have the nerve to touch our things.' The sweeper was almost dead with fright, but I reassured him and said, 'You need not be afraid of anything.' I also gave them some money to get some refreshments. Such is my sister-in-law's mental state."

Sri Ramakrishna treated his wife with that same love, gentleness and solicitude as he bestowed upon the best of his disciples. Of this the Mother spoke once as follows: "Ah, how Sri Ramakrishna treated me! Not even one day did he utter one word to wound my feelings! He never struck me even with a flower. One day, at

Dakshineswar, I entered his room with his meal. He thought it was Lakshmi (his meet) and said in a commanding tone, 'Shut the door when you leave the room.' Very well,' said I. He was startled to hear my voice, and said 'Who is it?' 'You! I did not know that you came here! I thought it was Lakshmi. Please forgive me.' I said, 'What difference does it make?' He never addressed me as 'Tu'. He always looked after my welfare. He would tell me, 'One should be always active. When you are idle, all sorts of bad thoughts and ideas crop up in your mind.' One day he gave me some hemp and asked me to make a net from it so that he could keep the pots of sweets in it, for his young disciples. I made the net accordingly, and with these abandoned fibres that were left over I constructed a pillow."

So tutored by her divine husband, Saradamuni Devi, now the Holy Mother, attained that peace, gladness and joy which only a blessed few could realise. Here is an example for modern India. If every husband would take care of his wife as much as Sri Ramakrishna did, and bestow some time at least to enlighten her on the several duties of life, India will not suffer from the consequences of an educated class of ignorant and supine wives. There would not then be any need for our men to throw the blame on their poor, helpless and ignorant women for many of the ills in our society for which men themselves are wholly responsible. Instances are not wanting even in modern India where husbands, though married to illiterate child-wives, having realised their responsibilities as husbands and householders, have taken upon their own shoulders

the task of educating and training their wives to fulfil aright the several duties enjoined upon householders. One such example was the late Justice Ranade of Bombay who taught his child wife the three R's and made her the pioneer of women's education in Maharashtra and the founder of the famous Seva Sadan Society in Poona, but these are rare indeed. Sri Ramakrishna discharged his duty as householder by instructing and initiating his wife into all his spiritual practices and discipline, and by thus making her his spiritual companion and the helpmate in life. The Holy Mother has said, "He taught me everything, secular and spiritual. He taught me how to arrange the wick of a lamp, what kind of a person each of the family was and how he or she should be behaved with, how to move in a stranger's house and such other worldly things. He also taught me the singing of the praise of the Lord and the secrets of meditation, Samadhi and the knowledge of Brahman."

Here is a great lesson for all householders to learn and to follow, and a suitable answer to all our Western critics who say that Hinduism does not advocate self-restraint, continence, purity and celibacy. If the present-day Hindu has failed to assimilate his sacred scriptures, nay, if he is completely ignorant of their true teachings, his ancestral religion is not to be blamed. The fault is more in the present-day school education and the so-called orthodox practices and customs which have nothing to do with real religion. Sri Ramakrishna's constant advice to his disciples was not to become entangled in the worldly life but to remain pure and detached

from it so as to realize God and attain the highest bliss.

Householder as he was in a sense, he not only preached but underwent the fiery ordeal himself of setting an example to his immediate disciples and to the wider world of a pure celibate life, even in the company of his wife. Will India need Birth-control teaching if the example of this great life has been properly presented before our young men and young women in schools and outside?

Again Sri Ramakrishna is different in many ways from other saints and aspirants after Godhead, the latter always avoiding the sight of women. These, apparently unable to overcome the temptation of their sexuality, used abusive epithets upon the innocent fair sex, calling them by all sorts of names, as temptresses, devils in human form, enchantresses etc., whereas the truth was that they themselves were at fault. Being weak-minded they could not restrain their passions. Even the compassionate Buddha ran away from his wife and child, and desisted to accept women as his disciples and to receive them into his fold. But Sri Ramakrishna is unique and supreme in this respect, and in divine nature, which is sexless. Acting according to self, he could even sleep with his wife in the same bed. His mind being ever fixed on God and lost to all body consciousness.

The Holy Mother's own words give us an idea of his attitude in regard to women. She was one day shampooing his legs. She asked him, "How do you think of me?" To which Ramakrishna replied, "The Mother who is in the Shrine, the mother who gave birth to this body and is now living in the Nababat—even she is

now shampooing my feet. Really I tell you, I find in you an embodiment of the Divine Mother Herself." Sri Ramakrishna found in all women—even in the most corrupt—the presence of the Mother of the Universe.

Sri Ramakrishna had a profound reverence for womanhood. To him God was primarily the Mother and woman was Her shrine. He saw in each woman the sanctified image of Divine Mother. Even the street-walker had in his eyes something holy in her. The reflection of Divinity, he declared, can never be completely obscured. He used to say that this was the Divine Mother's age and woman must take a leading part in shaping the world's life. She would fulfil her high mission, he believed, not, however, by denying her womanhood, but by glorifying it.

All living beings possess the immortal soul—a spark of that divine—which in some will be dim and hidden, and in others bright and sparkling according to the particular mode of life and daily practices. If those whom the world condemns as sinners and criminals are brought under good teaching and influences, very often the divine element in them asserts itself and they become wholly good and useful. That was the great lesson taught by Sri Ramakrishna and by all the great prophets of the world. Any human individual, hardened criminal and sinner though he may be, if he becomes truly repentant and comes to have absolute faith in himself and in the wisdom and goodness of his Creator, and makes an honest attempt to become good, is sure to attain his desired end. Many such men and women who came under the influence of Sri Ramakrishna and the Holy Mother turned

a new leaf in their lives and by the mere touch of their holy person were metamorphosed into totally different individuals beyond all recognition. That is why God says, "Between me and my devotee there is no difference. My wisdom is his wisdom, My life is his life, My bliss is his bliss."

Sri Ramakrishna was great beyond all human descriptions, but without the loving and sympathetic co-operation of his wife, he could not have risen to that supreme height of spiritual greatness and wisdom. At one time Sri Ramakrishna and Saradamani Devi used to sleep in the same bed. Often, all through the night Sri Ramakrishna would be absorbed in Samadhi, his body as rigid as in death; and his young wife would be put to fright at the sight of this. Sri Ramakrishna therefore taught her the way of bringing down his mind to body-consciousness by the repetition of certain mystic letters in the ear. Although this alleviated her fears to a great extent, still she could have little sleep at night. Realising her difficulty Sri Ramakrishna made arrangements for her sleep at the Nahabat. From what he said about those days it is clear that if Saradamani Devi also had not been completely free from all desires, he would not have so completely escaped from the taint of body-consciousness. Here the woman was stronger than the man. This is true of many a great man who made a mark in the world. The wife has always silently and behind the scenes influenced and shaped the husband's mind and career.

From this and other instances we realise how whole-heartedly the wife of Sri Ramakrishna got into his spirit and assimilated all his teachings and

more than fulfilled his expectations of her. Here is another instance of her nobility, in Sri Ramakrishna's own words : "When a Marwari devotee offered ten thousand rupees, I felt as if he had plunged a saw into my head. I cried to Mother, 'O, Mother, do you want to tempt me at last ?' I wanted to know her (his wife's) mind in the matter, and when she came, I said to her, 'The devotee wants to give this money. But as I cannot accept it, he wants to give it in your name. Why do you not accept it ? What do you say to it ?' But she replied at once, 'How can that be ? The money can never be accepted. For if I take it, it will be as if you took it. If I accept it, I shall have to spend it in your service; it will thus be practically accepted by you. People revere you for your renunciation ; this money must never be accepted.' Hearing her I heaved a sigh of relief."

His extreme courtesy and consideration for her is amply illustrated by the following incident : One day she was bringing to him a basket of fruits and vegetables with all the eagerness and pride of a happy child. He looked at it gravely and said, "But why so extravagant ?" "At least it was not for myself !" said the young wife, all her sunshine gone, in sudden disappointment, and she turned and went away, crying quietly. But this, Sri Ramakrishna could not bear to see. "Go, one of you," he said, turning to the boys beside him, "and bring her back. My very devotion to God will take wings, if I see her weep !"

During Sri Ramakrishna's incurable illness, the Holy Mother nursed him day and night, preparing his diet

and attending to his other comforts along with his devoted disciples.

He passed away in her 33rd year and in his 51st year. When she was going to put on her widow's garb after her husband's demise, Sri Ramakrishna revealed himself to her in the healthy appearance of his early days, and holding her hand, said, "Am I dead that you are removing the signs of wifehood ?" After that she never bared her wrists. She always put on a cloth with a thin red border and wore bangles on her hands.

She lived for another 24 years after her husband's death, preaching his gospel to his and her disciples, and was a mother to all of them in the highest sense of that word. The remaining period of her life was remarkable and significant in every respect. She proved herself to be the best disciple of Sri Ramakrishna. Thousands of men and women devotees came to see her from all parts of India and from the outside world, to pay their respects and to receive her blessings. She showed herself in word, deed and thought to be capable of the highest spiritual knowledge and wisdom. Her later life was a continuous process of spiritual ministration, she being called upon to play the part of a Guru and a teacher to many a devotee who sought her help to attain peace and bliss. She was highly intelligent and possessed an up-to-date knowledge of the world so as to give appropriate answers and advice to many a worldly-minded individual. She loved all and sympathised with the joys and sorrows of the world. A true description of this illustrious and divine personality is not possible without referring to her conversations and to incidents in her daily life pre-

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served for us by devoted disciples. We shall pass in review through some of the pages of these instructive records in the rest of this study.

One lady devotee said, Mother, I have five daughters. I cannot find suitable husbands for them. I am so anxious about it.

Mother : Why do you worry about their marriage? If you cannot find suitable husbands for them, please send them to the Sister Nivedita Girl's School. They will be trained there. They will be very happy in the school.

Another day in the morning Radhu, her niece, was ready to go to the Christian Missionary School of the neighbourhood. Golap-ma came and said to the Mother, "Radhu is now a grown-up girl. Why should she go to the school any more?" She asked Radhu not to go to the school. Radhu began to cry. The Mother said, "She is not quite grown-up. Let her go to the school. She can do immense good to others if she gets education and learns some useful arts from the school. She has been married in a backward village. Through education she will not only improve herself but will be able to help others." Radhu was allowed to go to the school.

When talking to women on household duties, the Mother said, "One must always do some work. It keeps both the body and the mind fit. In my early days at Jayrambati, I was always busy, day and night, with some work or other. I never visited my neighbours. People would blurt out at the very sight of me, 'Dear me, the daughter of Shyama has been turned to a lunatic! I did not see anybody in order to escape such criticism."

Her advice to her own niece who was in an angry mood one day is worth quoting here. She reprimanded her and said, "Women should not show so much anger. They must practise forbearance. Women are generally very sensitive. A mere word upsets them. Words also are so cheap nowadays. They should have patience."

The Holy Mother had practised forbearance and self-control to the highest degree, yet she could never tolerate or be a witness to injustice or cruelty to anybody in any form. One of her woman

devotees describes the following incident. "It was evening when I went to Bazaar to see the Holy Mother. She was kind enough to ask me to spread her small carpet on the floor and fetch her beads. She soon became absorbed in her meditation. Across the lane there was an open space. A few labourers lived there with their family. One of the male members began to beat one woman terribly probably his wife. Slaps and fistfights began to be showered upon her. Then he kicked her with such force that she was thrown to a distance, with a child in her arms. Then he started kicking her again. The Mother could not proceed with her meditation any more. Extremely modest though she was and though her voice could hardly be heard by people on the ground floor, she came to the porch of the second floor, stood by the iron railing and cried aloud in a tone of sharp reprimand, 'You rogue! Are you going to kill the girl outright? I am afraid she is already dead!' Hardly did the man look at her than he became quiet like the snake before its charmer, and released the woman. The sympathy of the Mother made the woman burst into loud sobs. We heard that her only fault was that she did not cook in time. Afterwards the man became his old self again and wanted to be at peace with the woman. The Holy Mother saw this and came back to her room."

The Holy Mother's love and concern for her disciples knew no bounds. When Suradhamani Devi's mother deplored in the bearing of Sri Ramakrishna that her daughter would have no children, Sri Ramakrishna seemed to have said that many good children would call her mother. "When one has earthly children, sometimes they are bad and disobedient," he said to the Holy Mother on one occasion, "but the children I have brought to you are good and pure and will never cause you trouble." This prophecy of Sri Ramakrishna was fulfilled to the very letter. All the young disciples of Sri Ramakrishna loved her and revered her as their own mother, and she in turn was so tender and full of that maternal love for them all. She would be so solicitous about their welfare, would cook for them with her own hands, serve them and feed them with sweets and pray

for them to Sri Ramakrishna. Once when some devotees went to her village to be initiated by her, on hearing from them that they were caught on the way in rain and darkness, she actually went into tears and reprimanded them for having risked so much.

Again the Holy Mother's advice to a young widow devotee is worth repeating for the benefit of our women readers. That devotee writes : "Once I was going to my father-in-law's house when the Holy Mother gave me the following advice, 'Don't be familiar with anybody. Don't take much part in the social functions of the family. Don't be inquisitive about others. Gradually increase the time of meditation and prayer, and read the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna.' "

Regarding the instruction that the Holy Mother gave her on another occasion, she writes: "She said to me, 'Never trust a man, even not your own father or brother, what to speak of others. Let me again repeat, don't trust a man, even if God comes to you in the form of a man.' She forbade me to frequent the monastery and other places where the monks lived. She would say, 'You may have no bad intention in your mind. You visit them with pure thoughts, but if your presence brings any impure ideas into their minds, then you will also be partly responsible for it.' She forbade me to make pilgrimage without discrimination of time or company."

Again when one of her disciples lost his father, she advised him to look after his mother and make her quite comfortable before he thought of renouncing the world and seeking his own spiritual welfare. "Everyone should serve his mother. It is all the more incumbent upon you because you have all come to me with the purpose of dedicating your life to the service of others. Had your father not left any money for your mother, I would have asked you to earn money and look after her comfort. Through the grace of Sri Ramakrishna, that obstacle has been removed. Simply see that the money left at her disposal is not wasted. Make some arrangement about it, and look after her as much as you can. Is it a small advantage for you? One cannot earn money in strictly honest ways. Money always taints the mind. For this reason I ask you to

settle the pecuniary affairs of your mother as soon as possible. Such is the fascination of money that if you involve yourself too much in it, you will feel attracted to it. You may think that you are above money and that you will never feel any attraction for it as you have once renounced it. You may further think that at any moment you may leave it behind. No, child, never harbour this thought in your mind. Through a tiny hole it will enter into your mind and then strangle you gradually. You will not even know it. Especially as you belong to Calcutta, you know the value of money. Settle your mother's affairs as soon as possible and run away from Calcutta. Further, if you can persuade your mother to go to a holy place, you can both lead a spiritual life, forgetting your worldly relationship. Just now your mother is stricken with grief. I think this is the best arrangement. Your mother is now quite advanced in years. Always talk to her about God. You will really fulfil the duty of a son if you can help her to gather the means for her ultimate journey. You have grown by sucking her milk. How much suffering did she undergo to raise you to manhood? Know that service to her is your highest duty. But it is a quite different matter if she stands in the way of your spiritual life. Why don't you bring her to me?" I shall see what she is like. I may give her a few words of instruction if they will be of help to her. But beware! Don't involve yourself in worldliness on the plea of serving your mother. After all, it is nothing but the maintenance of a widow. It means a very trifling sum. Try to settle her affairs as quickly as possible, even at a loss. Sri Ramakrishna could never bear the touch of money. You are all out in the world, taking his name on your lips. Always remember his word. Money is at the root of all the disasters you see in the world. You are young. Money will attract your mind to other temptations. Beware!"

In reply to a question of one of her disciples, she said, "It is true that one may put off a pious intention on considering the propriety or impropriety of the time, but death does not make any distinction of time. As death is always uncertain, one should carry out virtuous wishes whenever

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the opportunity presents itself without waiting for a particular time."

The following conversation of the Holy Mother with one of her woman-devotees will convey to our readers the high ideals of a married Hindu couple and the duty to their children and family :

Mother : Look at the child who has renounced the world. He has left everything behind in the name of Sri Ramakrishna. The worldly men beget children without number, as if that is their duty in this world. Sri Ramakrishna used to say, 'One must practise self-control after the birth of one or two children.' Yesterday a young woman came to see me. She had a bunch of children, some hanging from her back and some clinging to her arms. She could hardly manage them. Can you imagine what she told me ? She said, 'Mother, I do not at all enjoy this worldly life.' I said, 'How is that my child ? You have got so many young ones !' She replied, 'That is the end of it. I will not have any more.' I said, 'It would be nice if you could carry out your intention.'

The Mother began to laugh.

Devotee : Well, Mother, according to our Hindu conception the husband is our most adorable teacher. The scriptures say that through serving him one can go to heaven, and even be united with God. Now, if a wife, somewhat against the will of the husband, tries to practise self-control, through supplication and spiritual talk, is it sinful for her ?

Mother : Certainly not ! Whatever you do for the realisation of God cannot have any sinful effect. Self-control is absolutely necessary. All the hard disciplines enjoined upon Hindu widows are meant to help them practise self-control.

All the acts of Sri Ramakrishna were directed to God alone. He once performed the Shodashi Puja, making me the object of worship. I asked him what I should do with the bangles, the clothes and other articles of worship. After a little thought he said that I could give them away to my own mother. My father was then alive. Sri Ramakrishna said to me, 'Don't think, when you present your mother with these articles, that she is an ordinary human being. Think of her as the direct embodiment of the Divine Mother of the

Universe. I acted accordingly. That was the nature of his teachings.

Her extreme humility and simplicity will be seen from the following incident : "The wife of a devotee brought her baby with her during one of her visits to the Holy Mother. The baby dirtied the blankets. The Holy Mother began washing it herself. When the baby's mother snatched it from her, the Mother replied, 'Why should I not wash it ? Is he not my relation ?'"

She looked upon her disciples as her own children and she never considered that any service to them was beneath her dignity. She, whom thousands revered and worshipped, was never proud and thought for even one minute that she was superior to the rest of the world. Her expressions and manners were always full of grace, tenderness, love and gentleness, and she could solve the knottiest problems of life as well as perform the lowliest of tasks to comfort and console others who sought her help. She had unlimited patience and in spite of her ill-health and other inconveniences, she would never send away devotees without listening to his or her troubles and without offering a word of comfort. She would particularly be kind and considerate to the poor amongst them.

Sister Nivedita, the English disciple of Swami Vivekananda, who knew the Holy Mother personally writes, "To me, it has always appeared that she is Sri Ramakrishna's final word as to the ideal of Indian womanhood."

The Hindu ideal of marriage has been fulfilled in the lives of Sri Ramakrishna and the Holy Mother ; for they were one in spirit but twain in body. Sri Ramakrishna and Holy Mother were in the world and still not of it. They lived for others and never for themselves. They have set an example to the modern world by illustrating in their very lives the ideals of the most ancient of all religions, Hinduism, and thereby making it possible for others to follow those ideals. At a time when India's

sons and daughters were beginning to forget all about their past and ignore their own precious heritage, the soul of India took birth in Sri Ramakrishna and Saradamam Devi to demonstrate to the world the potentialities and virtues of the Hindu race. This description of the life and personality of the holiest and purest of women will not be in vain if the daughters of India begin to think and find time even in the midst of their busy lives to study their ancient scriptures in the light of the lives of

these two great incarnations of Godhead. Then they will understand that the highest knowledge and wisdom are not to be had by mere book-learning but by looking within themselves. They will recognise themselves to be the storehouse of all human virtues, if only they realise that the human soul is but a part of the universal soul and make an honest attempt to reach Him, the All-wise, the All-good, the Omniscient and the Omnipotent—the ultimate goal of all human existence.

SOME DISCIPLES OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

By Swami Jagadiswarananda

[Swami Jagadiswarananda is a monk of the Ramakrishna Order and is well-known as a contributor to several journals in this country. These short sketches of some of the disciples of the Master will not only reveal the greatness of these personalities but also the greatness of Sri Ramakrishna whose glory they reflect.]

IN THE following paragraphs we are giving brief sketches of some lay and monastic disciples of Sri Ramakrishna who have not come much into the limelight of public recognition. They were nevertheless great personalities and were intimately connected with the Master's life. They were also largely responsible for spreading his message and for strengthening the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Movement which has to-day gained a world-wide significance. Little is known outside a limited circle of friends and admirers about their uncommon devotion and dedication to God, and little also is available in print about the part they have played in preaching the gospel of Sri Ramakrishna. Swami Vivekananda is omitted from this account as the public has read sufficiently about him, and know fairly well about his work

in starting and stabilising the Mission of the Master in India and abroad. The Holy Mother who may rightly be described as the foremost of the Master's disciples is also not included because there is a special article devoted to her elsewhere in this issue. A study of these personalities is also useful in understanding Sri Ramakrishna; for, one aspect or other of the many-sided genius of Sri Ramakrishna is embodied and illustrated in the lives of these devoted disciples through whom his glory and greatness were manifested after he had shaken off the mortal coil.

MATHURANATH

We shall begin this account of the great devotees of Sri Ramakrishna with a sketch of Mathuranantha, the son-in-law of Rani Rasmani, who founded the Temple of Dakshineswar where the Master spent the greater part of his God-intoxicated life. Though by







Mathura Nath



'M' or Master Mabasaya
(Prof. Mahendra Nath Gupta)

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himself a shrewd man of the world in the full sense of the term, Mathuranath was perhaps the first to recognise the spiritual genius of Sri Ramakrishna who was then but an obscure priest in the Temple of which Mathuranath was practically the lord and master. This in itself speaks volumes of the extraordinary spiritual calibre lying behind the apparent worldliness of this young aristocrat. The pride of wealth and worldly position did not in the least interfere with his reverence and devotion for the Master whom men in general regarded at that time only as a low-paid employee of his with a somewhat deranged brain. During the period of storm and stress that characterised the early spiritual development of Sri Ramakrishna, Mathuranath, with an understanding so rare among the worldly-minded, stood fast by the Master, taking every care of his health and physical comfort of which he himself was supremely unmindful, and providing him with all facilities for carrying on spiritual practices under the guidance of various adepts. It is no exaggeration to say that the devotion and liberality of Mathur had much to do at least in providing the external conditions for the full flowering of the Master's spiritual genius. For this, the world at large, and the devotees of Sri Ramakrishna in particular, owe a deep debt of gratitude to this devoted worldling. Sri Ramakrishna himself recognised the value of his services, and as a token of this recognition described him as the most important of his 'rasaddars' or divinely appointed care-takers.

There is an exquisite tenderness about the intimacy and the mutual devotion between these two diver-

gent characters—the austere devotee whose watchword in life was the renunciation of Kama-Kanchana (lust and gold) on the one hand, and the wealthy aristocrat who never felt any repugnance for the good things of life on the other. Mathur, of course, was not a credulous simpleton to be imposed upon by any assumed garb of piety. He fully shared the rationalistic and sceptical spirit common to the English-educated men of the time, and it was not without several tests, cunningly planned, that he allowed his initial impression regarding the Master's saintliness to crystallise itself into unwavering faith and devotion. But once this faith was engendered by observing the immaculate purity of the Master's character and by the spiritual experiences he himself gained in his company, Mathur manifested in his attitude towards the Master a rare type of trust, devotion and unending love, for which no self-sacrifice was too great, no considerations of honour and prestige too valuable, in the service and adoration of the object of its attention. Though parsimonious by nature, he would, at the Master's wish, spend hundreds and thousands of rupees in feeding and clothing the poor; at his request he would remit the rent of the famine-stricken tenants of an estate; to please him he would arrange for religious discourses and Sastric debates and lavishly distribute gifts and prizes among devotees and scholars; to entertain and delight the Master he would make princely arrangements for pilgrimages to holy places like Benares, Brindavan and Navadwip, spending large sums of money. In fact he looked upon all his wealth as meant for the Master's service, and at one time wanted even

to transfer the ownership of his estates to him, and himself be only his steward and agent. The offer of course was rejected.

Besides this, the intimate association of the Master with Mathur's family and the liberties allowed him in his household show how unreserved was Mathur's trust in him. The Master was called 'Baba' or 'Father' by Mathur and his wife, and neither of them would consider any festival or religious ceremony in their house to have been celebrated properly if the Master could not attend it for some reason or other. The 'Father' had free access into the inner apartments of the house, and it was often a great delight for the ladies to be in his holy company and hear his godly talks. During the Master's Madhura-Bhava Sadhana, when he impersonated a woman, dressing like and cultivating the feelings of one of the fair sex, Mathur insisted on his living in his own inner apartments along with the ladies of his household. Nay, so close was Mathur's intimacy with the Master and so solicitous was he about taking care of him that when the Master was in his house, he would not be satisfied without arranging for the 'Father's' sleep in the same bed-room where he and his wife slept.

Addressing Hriday Mathur once said, "My wife, children, wealth, position—these and all other things are unreal; Ramakrishna alone is real." There is no adequate description of the character of this devoted householder, than this brief profession of faith coming from his own mouth.

It must also be remarked that as Mathur loved and trusted him, the Master too staunchly stood by him in all his spiritual and secular diffi-

culties, and confided all his thoughts and aspirations to him as a child. What was more he cured him of his scepticism and sensuous inclinations, and gave him a spiritual upliftment which he could not have gained by himself.

THE MASTER MAHASHAY

The only other householder disciple whom we shall consider in these sketches is Mahendra Nath Gupta or Master Mahashay, more familiarly known by his pen-name "M." Of all the lay disciples of the Master he did the most for disseminating the Master's message. "The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna" compiled by M. is the most popular of all publications on the Master and has carried his message far and wide even to distant villages not only of Bengal but of other provinces as well. The biblical simplicity of its style appeals alike to men and women of all classes and types and its description of the events and holy conversations of the Master's everyday life are so vivid that the reader often feels transported to the actual scenes. The Gospel has been rendered into almost all Indian vernaculars and many European languages : "Socratic dialogues are Plato all over—you are entirely hidden," said Swami Vivekananda writing to him about the Gospel. A comparative study will show that the Gospel may rightly be bracketed with the famous Dialogues of Buddha.

Like many other educated youths of his time Mahendra Nath owed his religious awakening to Keshub Chandra Sen. His spiritual thirst was finally quenched by the Master with whom he came in contact at the age of 28. Since then till his end, for a period of over half a century, the one

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object for which he lived and laboured was to talk of him to others and to live up to his teaching. Even in his active career as a Head Master in High Schools or as a Professor in Colleges he lived an austere and intense life of spiritual discipline, never allowing his mind to be ruffled even by the most provoking circumstances and perplexing situations. Aptly does an English writer describe him : "A venerable patriarch has stepped from the pages of the Bible, and a figure from Mosaic times has turned to flesh. . . . In that grave, sober presence I realise instantly that there can be no light persiflage, no bandying of wit or humour, no utterance even of harsh cynicism and dark scepticism. . . . His character with its commingling of perfect faith in God and nobility of conduct is written in his appearance for all to see."

According to the mandate of the Master, Mahendra Nath lived in the world but he was never of it. He simplified his living so much that it bordered on ascetic sternness and plainness. To drive home to his own mind the idea of homelessness and to slacken the bondage of domestic ties, he would sleep in the open balcony of the Senate Hall of the Calcutta University among the waifs and strays of the city who passed their nights there. He spent his life mostly in a room of the High School of which he was the proprietor and rector; and there, surrounded by a circle of wrapt listeners, he would lose himself while discoursing on the words of the Master till late hours of the night. It was an inspiration to hear him talking of his Master, God, or religion, throwing wonderful sidelights on the mysteries of spiritual life with apt

examples from the lives of the prophets and apposite quotations from scriptures.

Mahendra Nath was a perennial source of inspiration to all who came in contact with him. Even in the early days of his discipleship under the Master, being the Head Master of a High School, he was responsible for influencing the minds of several young men and directing them to Sri Ramakrishna. Some of the Sannyasin disciples of Sri Ramakrishna came from among them. Even among the later generations of the monks of the Ramakrishna Order, not a few owe their first inspiration to him. They ever met with encouragement from him in the pursuit of the monastic ideal. In fact so great was his reverence for the ideal of Sannyas that he often used to say : "A Sannyasin of the common type even is like a cultured graft-mango which, even if sour, is without any fibre. But a householder, however outstanding he may be, is like a country mango. It may be sweet but it is fibrous. There is a difference in the stuff." He also used to describe Sannyasins as 'whole time workers of God.' This distinction between the householder and the Sannyasin on which he always insisted, he used to apply in his own case too. Often his students and admirers who had become Sannyasins afterwards would go to him for inspiration. Though himself an illuminated sage, he would protest against their prostrating before him for the reason mentioned above, and would feel visibly moved if they did so in spite of his protestations. To shake hands with him as an equal is all that he liked them to do—so deep was his humility and so profound his regard for the ideal of

renunciation, the message of his master's life and teachings. Truly has it been said that in his presence no word was heard but the word of God, no word spoken but in description of His glory and no word read but what revealed the mystery of His being.

SWAMI BRAHMANANDA

We next pass on to the Sannyasin disciples who have been mainly responsible for spreading the message of the Master. Of these the first that requires consideration is Swami Brahmananda, universally recognised as next only to Swami Vivekananda in point of spiritual greatness. If the latter was responsible for carrying the message of the Master from one end of the globe to the other, it was under the fostering care of the latter that the work got stabilised and entered the stage of rapid expansion. He occupied the presidential seat of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission for more than two decades from its very establishment.

The spiritual eminence of the Swami can be well gauged from the fact that Swami Vivekananda described him reverently as a "Mountain of Spirituality." Considering the latter's dignified reserve, firmness and equipoise of mind, he would sometimes compare him with Bhishma of the Mahabharata. The brother-disciples' veneration for Swami Brahmananda almost amounted to adoration. To them he was the likeness of their Master. He was their beloved "Rajah" and was known by that appellation among the devotees of Sri Ramakrishna. His transcendental spirituality had installed him in the spiritual sonship of Sri Ramakrishna who fondled and treated him as a child. As a boy of 19, Swami

Brahmananda met the Master, and he perhaps of all his fellow-disciples, lived most in his company. He loved the Master as dearly as a child loves its father, and so unconventional was his relationship with him that in his playful mood he would run to him from time to time and sit on his lap. Under the influence of the Master's holy company and by the practice of Tapasya, his boyish innocence developed into profound spirituality.

As a wandering monk he visited numerous Tirthas in Northern and Western India, practising spiritual absorption in congenial places. Often he used to pass the whole night in meditation. A considerable portion of his itinerant life was, however, spent in Brindavan which he liked very much. In many of these places, he went into ecstasy. In those days his appearance was remarkably sober and serene, and an ineffable radiance shone over his face. His eyes were wonderfully lustrous and indrawn, and his person seemed to radiate spirituality. He was always calm and collected, and was marked for his inwardness of life.

As the spiritual head of the Order he took special interest in moulding the lives of young monks and novitiates, whose number increasingly swelled. He looked with parental care after their physical welfare, and personally attended to their grievances and inconveniences. His presence was an inspiration to the inmates of the Math and was always sought by them. His association with the devotees was a perennial source of delight to them. Though the Head of the Order, he was very unassuming and as the President he never commanded but only suggested. He was full of wit and humour and was a

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Sister Saradana



Miss Radha Krishna

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source of joy to all who would come in contact with him.

The Swami's spirit of renunciation, his spiritual insight and his wisdom in dealing with men and matters are well brought out by the following incident. A rich businessman, having lost his only son, wanted to bequeath his whole business concern to the Math and retire from the world. He began frequenting the Math and insisting that Swami Brahmananda should accept the gift, but the Swami however deferred giving any definite reply. This gentleman finally persuaded one of the Sadhus of the Math to plead on his behalf to the Swami for the acceptance of the gift. The Swami however told that Sadhu in reply: "By coming in contact with you the gentleman wants to renounce his wealth. On the other hand by associating with him you want to become a businessman! Wait and watch, and you will see the gentleman will change his mind." The course of events justified the Swami's caution; for the gentleman actually changed his mind.

The Swami was of a retiring disposition and would always avoid public limelight. When, however, he met people, he would welcome them and hear their talks. He would enter into the spirit of a person, be he a doctor, a lawyer, a professor, a dramatist or a journalist, and listen to them as a learner, about their professions or the subjects with which their minds were full. He would hardly speak about matters spiritual unless he was impressed by the enquirer's sincerity.

In his spiritual instructions to people, he used to lay special emphasis on the efficacy of Japa, devotional

songs and the reading of holy books. He instructed his disciples to meditate four times a day—morning, evening, noon and midnight. In the course of a conversation or in the midst of fun he would disclose a spiritual truth, or hint the solution of problems in a manner that went home into the questioner's mind. He always recommended combination of work and meditation in the case of generality of men. "Give 12 annas i.e. three-fourths of your mind to God, and devote the remaining 4 annas i.e. one-fourth to worldly duties and activities,"—this used to be one of his favourite sayings. Practice of religion and realisation of Truth were the burden of all his teachings.

Swami Brahmananda initiated only a handful of aspirants who were possessed of steadiness and sincerity. Men of position, learning or wealth without spiritual hankering were summarily dismissed by him and he gladly gave instruction even to the illiterate, the poor and the penitent with true religious thirst. Once he blessed with initiation a menial in whom he recognised spiritual calibre. His psychic powers were so developed that he could divine like his Master, the spiritual inclinations and possibilities of a person at a glance. He was endowed with the supernal faculty of transmitting spirituality to a worthy candidate. He carried about him a religious atmosphere; so wherever he went he breathed spiritual fragrance and became a centre of attraction for all religious-minded people. This spiritual son of Sri Ramakrishna was ever eager to help earnest men in the higher life and led many from the darkness of life to the light of God.

SWAMI SHIVANANDA

Swami Shivananda succeeded Swami Brahmananda as the President of the Math and Mission and occupied that position for about twelve years till his death. Mahapurush Maharaj, as he was popularly known, was the name given to him by Swami Vivekananda in recognition of his perfect control over the senses.

He was married and was in employment at the time he met the Master, but so receptive was he to spiritual ideas that from his first meeting with the Master, he decided to follow the ideals of renunciation and God-realisation. A considerable part of his long life of eighty years was devoted to austerity and contemplation. At Benares he spent many years, devoting his whole time to meditation, worship and study, eating very little food and never going out of the monastery. Even when he was engaged in work, no day passed without his getting up at 3 o'clock in the morning and spending several hours in meditation in the shrine room. So perfect a master was he of the palate that whatever the quantity and varieties of the delicacies served in his plate, he would never touch any of them except the simple preparations that he was usually accustomed to take. Those who had seen him in his younger days describe him as radiant in complexion and leonine in his gait. Majestic and grave, free from elation and depression, seeking no praise and offering no prayers, there was something in him characteristic of Buddhist ascetics. Whenever walking he was in the habit of fixing his gaze on the toe. Jokingly he remarked once that he might have been a Buddhist ascetic in the previous birth.

The spirit of renunciation in him was so stern that even blood-relations were nothing better than strangers to him. Once at the sight of his aged elder sister near by, he said addressing the assembled monks: "Five years ago when I met her I felt her to be an acquaintance of mine. Now I feel as though she is a stranger to me, the impression that she is my sister, the nearest blood relation, having been completely obliterated from the mind."

He had also remarkable spiritual experiences, of some of which at least he spoke to others. At the Master's touch he had experienced within the welling up of a divine joy, causing horripilation and tears for hours together. He had experienced the awakening and rising up of the Kundalini, accompanied by a sensation resembling that of ants creeping up. He perceived on several occasions that the whole universe was instinct with Chaitanya or consciousness. The test of the pudding lies in tasting it. Swami Shivananda's spiritual power is to be gauged by his capacity to mould people's life. He could put down the restlessness and turbulent spirit of an individual by a mere touch. He could by the exercise of his will help a person to overcome his resurgent passions that defied all his own attempts at control.

Not only in point of such powers, but also in the perfection and magnanimity of character did he show signs of his spiritual greatness. Though revered like a God by his innumerable disciples and admirers, he was child-like and free from every trace of egoism. This self-effacement in him he gave expression to, when he confided to an intimate disciple that Shivananda was dead long ago

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and that it was the Master alone who spoke through him. He felt this aloofness from the body, this sense of being only an instrument in the hands of the Divine in so tangible a form that in his last illness, even when subjected to the tortures of asthmatic fits, he could say when questioned that the body was suffering but he was quite happy. That this was no mere profession is testified by those who had seen him in the morning after a sleepless and torturous night, enquiring after others' welfare and speaking words of joy, encouragement and benediction, with the cheerful and beaming face of a child. No word of despair, sorrow or complaint would escape his lips.

His love of devotees and men of genuine piety was limitless. A monk suffering from bad health was asked by him why he did not leave Belur and go to some other place for a change. He replied that disease and death stalk everywhere, and that wherever he be, he will die at one time or other. Mahapurushji remarked therupon that that was his feeling too, and that he stayed at Belur, even though he was sure that he would live a healthier life in a bracing climate, because he felt that his departure to a more distant and inaccessible place will cause great disappointment to the large number of people who flocked to him for spiritual help. It is said that a devotee who had done great service to the Mission, falling into financial embarrassments felt shy of going to the Math for a long time. Mahapurushji, on knowing this, sent for him and asked him what amount would be required to relieve him of his immediate difficulties. Being told that Rs. 1,000 would do, he readily

gave away that amount from his small personal fund of Rs. 1,300, the offerings of some of his devoted disciples. The grateful gentleman wanted to give a receipt as a document, but the Swami thereupon remarked: "Is this the relation between you and us! The money is given unconditionally. If you are able to return it in future you may do so; otherwise not." This put the gentleman to tears. The Swami would even go to the length of requesting his wealthy devotees to relieve the financial embarrassments of earnest spiritual aspirants when worries of this kind prevented them from pursuing the spiritual ideal.

As the President of a big religious organisation he travelled all over India, carrying the message of Sri Ramakrishna to distant Provinces, and inspiring many devotees by his own life and character that reflected the glory of the great Master. His disciples are to be counted in thousands all over India and the outside world. Liberal and cosmopolitan in outlook, he made no distinction between Hindu and Muslim or Christian and Parsi; and no provincial and national barrier as between Madrasi and Bombay-man, Bengali and Hindustani, Indian and European ever vitiated his outlook.

The stern ascetic that he was, the Swami had in his early days a reputation to be a relentless disciplinarian and hard taskmaster. Indiscipline, inattention and lethargy would receive severe chastisement from him, and none but a few could stay with him in those days. But age and the responsibility of presidentship mellowed down his sternness of temper, and the fiery ascetic with his awful reserve and unapproachable aloofness, became the very picture of

sweetness, love and forgiveness before which even the guilty would feel no fear.

SWAMI SARADANANDA

From the two Presidents of the Math and Mission, we now come to one who was its Secretary during the presidentship of both of them. For Swami Saradananda was made Secretary by his illustrious spiritual brother, Swami Vivekananda, from the very inception of the work ; and the solidarity and expansion of the Math and Mission are largely due to the devotion, dexterity and administrative skill displayed by him during his regime extending over quarter of a century. He was for sometime the successor of Swami Vivekananda in the preaching work started by the Swami in America and England. But his most solid contribution towards the spreading of the Master's message, besides his services as the Secretary, is his great biography of the Master in Bengali running into several volumes. Being one of the most cultured and intellectual among the Master's disciples, he was perhaps the one most fitted to do this work, and generations yet unborn will be grateful to him for preserving for them the divine life-incidents and spiritual experiences of the Master in a form that comes to a very high standard of literary and philosophical excellence.

The spiritual eminence of the Swami is well indicated by the fact that his first request to his Master was to lead him to the highest spiritual experience of recognising God as dwelling in all creatures. Towards the end of his life he confessed frankly that he was blessed with that vision by his Guru's grace. That was

why he took whole-hearted interest in all philanthropic activities of the Mission in the time of flood, famine, fire, epidemics and other natural catastrophes. The Swami was largely responsible for popularising all over India the ideal of service now so much needed for our national upliftment. Physical, intellectual and moral service of God in man was his constant exhortation to his disciples.

Another outstanding trait of his character was his respect for women verging on worship. It was his realisation of the woman as the manifestation of the Divine Mother that was at the root of his devoted service to her in multifarious ways. To this may also be linked up his devotion to the Holy Mother whose service was the first and foremost concern of his life. He built up the Bagh Bazar Math in order to house her comfortably, and he also fixed up his headquarters there as the 'Darwan' or gate-keeper of the Mother. He was ever like an affectionate son to the Holy Mother. A striking incident characteristic of this relation between them took place a few days before the Holy Mother's passing away. It so happened that some one brought for her a tasty preparation of fried pulses, and the Mother, who was for days living on bland and insipid diet during her prolonged illness, had a strong inclination to eat it. Her attendants, however, coming to know of it feared that it might upset her already impaired digestive system and reported the matter to Swami Saradananda. He thereupon went to the Mother and asked her to give him something to eat, whereupon the Mother gave him the pulse preparation immediately, although she was herself very eager to eat it. The death of the Holy

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Mother whom he looked upon as the very duplicate form of his Master, came to him as a shock, and since then he retired more and more from public activities to the inner sanctuary of his soul.

Swami Saradananda was the very embodiment of forgiveness, impartiality and patience coupled with firmness—qualities abundantly needed for a successful executive head. He would always allow each individual to grow according to his own line of development, and would never rebuke a person or wound the feelings of an individual in pointing out his mistakes. There was also in him a complete readiness to own his own mistakes whenever he discovered them. He inspired confidence in all with whom he came in contact. His sympathetic heart and loving touch acted as a charm on people during their illness or when they were overcome with despair. His bulky body, august appearance, and grave look concealed within a tender heart and lent a divine dignity to his personality. Practicality and spirituality were beautifully harmonised in his life. In his later days Swami Saradananda was indifferent in health but wore a smiling face in illness. He was reluctant to accept services even from his attendant disciples and would not disclose an acute illness till he was laid up in bed. His patience and perseverance elicited praise even from Swami Vivekananda. In a strict Confucian sense he was a gentleman, and observed good manners and social etiquette as far as practicable in his monastic life. His talks, his dealings, and movements disclosed his unique self-restraint, and no provocation could disturb the balance of his mind. His friends found in him an ideal

example of a Sthitaprajna (one of steadied understanding), as described in the Gita; for he was an adept in the Yogic secret of right activity.

SWAMI PREMANANDA

We next come to another personage, less august, majestic and learned than the one we were considering till now, but still a centre of great spiritual attraction, who incessantly radiated the rays of purity, love and godliness on all that came near him. Swami Premananda, or Baburam Maharaj as he was familiarly known, was distinguished as the purest by his great Master from even among his young disciples of unsullied purity. "He is absolutely pure to the very marrow. No impure thought can even cross his mind," remarked the Master about him, and in recognition of this trait in him, he always liked to have him by his side as his attendant and allowed the young man the privilege of touching him in his ecstatic moods when he was specially sensitive to impure touch. He often called him by endearing names as "Kindred spirit" and "Golden Treasure."

The Swami too in his attitude towards the Master whom he looked upon as the Deity maintained several special characteristics. There was a feminineness about his devotional outlook, which often percolated even through his physical frame at the time of worship and in fervent devotional moods, imparting a special grace to his movements and to his naturally handsome body. His devotion belonged to the class of Raga Bhakti, as opposed to Vaishnava Bhakti,—the unconventional, intense and overflowing love of God resembling that of a passionate wife for her hus-

band. He always felt the presence of God, and used to see the form of his Master moving with him in his daily activities in the monastery. Unnoticed by any one he often used to sing and dance, as if for the entertainment of a Presence which he alone felt. Every act of his was dedicated to God, and so great was his delight in such worshipful service, that in the exaltation of it he would, in spite of his physical frailness, work day and night with little food and rest on the occasion of the Master's birth-day celebrations. In his love of God and devotion to His service, he did not care the least for scriptural study; for why should he study any book, when he found in his Master the very embodiment of their principles? Besides devotional manifestations and dedicated service, he had also his moments of deep contemplative absorption. One day in one such moment of absorption, a monk noticing that he had not gone for his night meal even long after the bell, and that he was sitting in a meditative posture without any outward consciousness, roused him up and asked whether he was sleeping. He replied by humming a song: "I have put sleep to sleep," etc.

As his love of God was great, so also was his love and regard for His devotees. So irresistible was his personal magnetism and so charming his loving disposition that the Math was a source of attraction to people of all classes and ages. At all hours of the day they flocked to him, 'the mother of the Math,' and nothing was so delightful to him as speaking of God to them, and feeding and entertaining them. For, was not every visitor to the Math devoted to God to some extent at least; otherwise, of all

places in a big city like Calcutta, with its numerous attractions, why should they visit the Math which offered nothing to feast their senses? So he thought. And his joy and satisfaction used to be boundless when any inmate of the Math undertook, even at great personal inconvenience, say, after a late meal, to cook food for these untimely visitors, and feed and entertain them. Before this celestial love even some hardened sinners, the classes generally shunned and ostracised by society—drunkards, rowdies and rogues—got transformed and turned a new leaf in their lives. It is needless to add that many were the pure-hearted young men whom the loving contact of this scaphic soul attracted to the life of renunciation and piety.

Though the centre of attraction for numbers of people, the Swami never accepted any one as his personal disciple. But he would point out to them the way of divine love and make them feel within the nearness of God and the guru. In all that he did there was absolutely no personal consideration at all. He never accepted any presents from his admirers, and did not keep with him even superfluous clothing other than what was just required for his simple needs. So true was he to the ideal of renunciation that after his passing away, his tin box was found to contain only one or two pieces of cloths and a complimentary copy of a Math publication.

The Swami played an important part in spreading the message of the Master. He made several propaganda tours all over Bengal, especially the eastern Districts of the Province, and wherever he went, he was a great source of attraction and inspiration. But his greatest contribu-



Swami Premananda

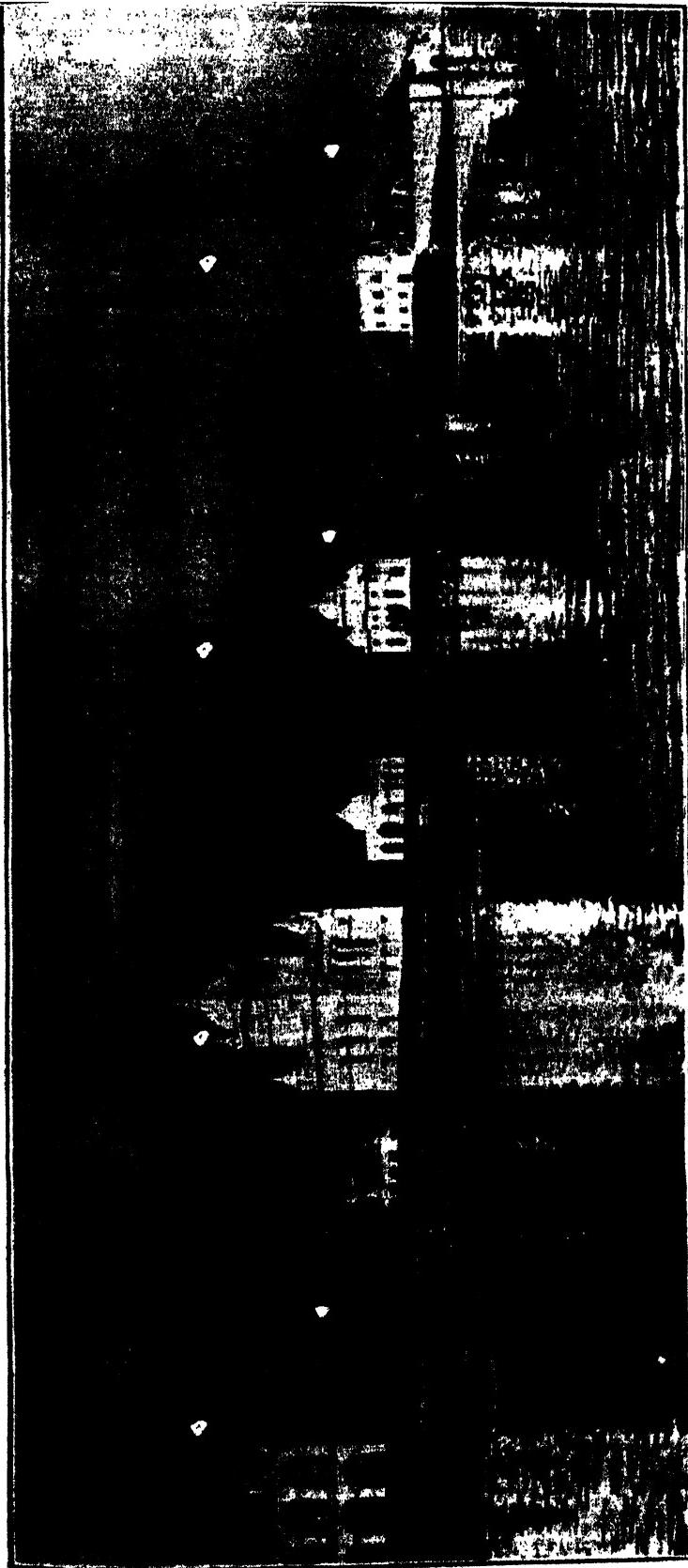


Fig. 1 Head masters of the Ravankotrama Math and Mission, year (Calcutta)

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tion to the Master's work was his training of the young men who had adopted the life of renunciation. In this he has left a tradition still remembered by many. Swami Saradananda, as we pointed out before, was a believer in individual development. Swami Premananda, however, preferred the method of actively interfering with men and mercilessly chiselling away their eccentricities and angularities of character. He compared his method to that of the potter who uses all his force in cleaning and kneading the clay thoroughly before applying it quietly to the wheel to take the special shape required. For, the refinement of the clay of human character, the pre-requisite of all higher spiritual development was the sole object of the apparently harsh treatment meted out to the young men under him by this otherwise loving and kind personage. For as soon as a young man, attracted by the Swami's love and piety, joined the Order and entered his school of discipline, he would discover another facet of the Swami's character, the uncompromising task-master and disciplinarian in him. The slightest neglect of duty or inattention brought from him severe chastisement. Did any one cut too deep when removing the potato skin or did he arrange the fruits and flowers for worship inartistically, he would surely receive severe rebuke. One who used more than a single match stick to light a lamp at a time will be reminded that the income of the Math came from poor people and one should be more careful in spending it economically. If a young man cut his finger carelessly while chopping fodder for cattle, he would be severely reprimanded for his carelessness, and little sympathy would be shown him

for his suffering. Those who fell sick were given very little attention and comforts, so that they may remember that as Sannyasins only the shadow of a tree was their legitimate due. From morning 4 A.M. to 10 o'clock at night when they retired for sleep, the Swami would fully engage the young men in some work or other, tirelessly supervising every bit of their activities and sharply rebuking them for their mistakes. When asked for the reason why he made the young men work so hard, he would say that in the beginning of their spiritual life they would be able to forget their family and its attachments and cultivate the monastic outlook and its new ties and affections, only if they got accustomed to engage their minds wholly in works of the nature of service to Sri Ramakrishna. There was, however, a silver lining in all his harshness and severity; for these were punctuated by acts of self-forgetting love and disinterested affection, and all knew full well that he was never actuated by selfishness or revengeful motives. The sole object of his training was to inculcate in these young men his own cherished ideal of life, namely, the practice of resignation unto the Lord, which he used to express in the significant words : "Not I, Not I, but Thou." And it is worth remarking that on the shoulders of many of the young men trained by the Swami has fallen today the mantle of the early pioneers of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Movement.

SWAMI RAMAKRISHNANANDA

Another disciple of the Master who worked indefatigably for spreading his message was Swami Ramakrishnananda. A keen mathe-

matician and an erudite scholar in English and Sanskrit, he held a position of intellectual eminence among the Master's disciples. But the devotee in him, however, predominated the scholar, and it was in recognition of his whole-hearted devotion for, and absorption in, the service of the Master that Swami Vivekananda conceded to him the name of 'Ramakrishnananda' which he himself would have liked to take. His relationship with Sri Ramakrishna has been compared to that of Hanuman towards Sri Ramachandra. An anecdote is current about the monkey-devotee that after vainly searching for Sita everywhere in the harem of Ravana's palace, he was about to give up the quest, feeling that it would be improper and undesirable for him, a Brahmachari, to witness any more the scenes that greeted his eyes in the privacy of the inner apartments. Just then the devotee, however, recalled : " What is this Brahmacharya for ? Is it not for pleasing the Lord and realising Him ? Even that pleasure of the Lord I am gaining by doing his work. How foolish was then my previous thought ! " Such was the devotional attitude of Swami Ramakrishnananda too ; for, in his case both the means and the end of spiritual life was the service of the Master.

And this service he did with a steadfastness and devotion that may seem romantic in the modern age. In the Master's life-time, especially in his last illness, he was the most untiring of his attendants. After the Master's passing away he continued the service of the Master through the worship of his likeness in which he felt his living presence. Because of clear perception of the Deity in

the picture or image, there was no conventionality about his worship which partook more of the nature of spontaneous service to a living being. He would feed and clothe the likeness of the Master ; he would put it to sleep as one might do to a beloved person in flesh ; he would fan it for hours at noon. And once in Madras, it is said, while he was living in a dilapidated building, it rained suddenly at night, whereupon he stood the whole night with an umbrella protecting his Master's likeness that was installed in a leaking corner, lest he should disturb his sleep if he removed him to another place. In the earlier days of the monastery, when the other Sannyasin disciples of Sri Ramakrishna used to be absorbed always in meditation and devotional practices or went to distant parts of India as wandering monks, the Swami was the only person who stuck on tenaciously to the place where his Master's relics were kept, continuing the service to him as he used to do in his life-time ; for to him, as for the monkey-hero Hanuman, no spiritual discipline was of greater value than the service of the Deity. And in that service was his delight and through it he gained perfection —the highest form of Vairagya (dispassion), Bhakti (divine love), and gnana (spiritual knowledge).

" The standard he set for himself in the life he had taken up was a very high one," remarks an American writer about the Swami. " With his breadth and loftiness of vision he was as humble and simple as a child. He was always an imposing figure but his features were plain save when they were lighted by his smile which transfigured them and lent them a rare spiritual beauty." He was to the

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core an orthodox Hindu, yet was he very liberal and catholic in his religious outlook and noted for his devotion to Christ and deep understanding of the Bible. His powers of endurance were remarkable, it being reputed that for a particular autumnal worship he would sit continuously for twenty-four hours before the altar without moving an inch even once from the place.

To this Mahatma with his portly form, his spirit of consecrated service and his orthodox ways of living, the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda movement owes a debt the magnitude of which can never be overestimated. The continuity of the central Math, the nucleus of the movement, was kept up by his unwavering devotion to the Master's service which made him forego the luxuries of a Sannyasin's life like itineracy and retreat into solitude. Often under very difficult conditions of life, he stuck on to the relics of the Master for a period of nearly twelve years, without stirring an inch from the city of Calcutta. And when he at last left Calcutta, it was due to the compulsion of his much esteemed fellow-disciple, Swami Vivekananda, who wanted him to start a centre of work in Madras and be an apostle of the Master to South India. For over a decade he lived and laboured in Madras passing through difficulties of an overwhelming nature that would have disheartened a less stalwart spirit. Though he did not live to see the fruits of his labours, he planted the seeds of devotion in the minds of a few sincere men, which have since then sprouted into big institutions—monastic, educational and industrial—and into publications, magazines and a crop of young men who have dedicated

their lives to the Master's cause. His intellectual contribution too was by no means small, consisting as it does in a number of books in English of great religious and philosophical value, and an excellent book on Sri Ramanuja in Bengali.

CONCLUSION

In the foregoing sketches we have picked out only a few of the great disciples of the Master who worked actively for many years in spreading the Master's message and whose influence is tangibly imprinted on the Math and the Mission. There are several others, Sannyasins and householders, men and women, whose lives of matchless purity, devotion and self-sacrifice have been a source of inspiration to innumerable souls in India and other parts of the world. Among the Sannyasins we may mention in passing Swamis Yogananda and Turiyananda who were both noted for their learning, austerity, control of mind and spiritual realisation, and of whom the latter worked for a short period in America; the learned Swami Abhedananda, otherwise known as Kali Tapaswi for his austere life, whose valuable work in the cause of Vedanta in America has received wide recognition both in the East and the West, but of whom we do not write much here because he is still alive in our midst; and Swami Adbhutananda who lived away from the Math and its works in wrapt contemplation without sleep at night, but was none the less much respected as 'the greatest miracle of Sri Ramakrishna' for having risen from an illiterate servant boy to the status of a Paramahamsa. Innumerable are the pious householders of whom we can mention but a few here. Ramachandra

Datta, the atheist who became a great devotee by the Master's contact, wrote his first biography and moulded the lives of many in later times ; Girish Chandra Ghosh, the man of faith, who gave his 'power of attorney' to Sri Ramakrishna and thereby rose from a talented sinner and debauchee to an inspired saint, and whose immortal dramas in Bengali have done much to spread the Master's ideas ; the pious householder Balaram Bose who stood fast by the Math in its early days of struggle after Sri Ramakrishna's passing away ; Suresh Mitra, the Bohemian who turned into a saint under Sri Ramakrishna's influence and became a tower of strength on the side of the Math ; and last but not the least Nag Mahashay whose fiery Vairagya (dispassion), faith, devotion, humility, spirit of service and spiritual realisation elevated him to the highest status of sainthood—these are some of the names that will ever be remembered along with the divine life of Sri Ramakrishna. Mention has also to be made of at least a few of the remarkable group of women devotees that gathered round the Master—of Gopaler Ma (Gopal's Mother) whose simple story according to Romain Rolland is worthy of a place among the Franciscan legends and whose romantic realisation of God as Baby Krishna cannot but thrill even an irreligious heart ; of Jogen Ma who spent years in prayer and meditation in Brindavan and

whose deeply contemplative eyes spoke of a highly spiritual soul within ; of Golap Ma who was imbued with the spirit of service and who never hesitated to call a spade a spade ; and of Gouri Ma who renounced her home early in life to devote herself to prayer, meditation and scriptural study and whose vast learning and remarkable organising capacities have been responsible for the starting of an important Girls' educational institution in Calcutta known as Saradeswari Girls' School. Most of these pious and saintly ladies were the Holy Mother's companions and have done much in moulding the lives of many men and women.

Almost all these great souls have passed away, but their silent lives have left an indelible impression on the spiritual life of the Order and are the inexhaustible sources of inspiration to the monks and devotees of Sri Ramakrishna. Their mortal frames are no more to be seen, but their examples, words and associations are written in letters of gold in the annals of the movement, infusing hope and strength into the lives of countless men and women.

On this auspicious occasion of Sri Ramakrishna's Birth-Centenary, let us reverently contemplate on the personalities of these great spiritual children of his, through whose example and precept mankind has received the Revelation embodied in the life and words of the great Incarnation of the Modern Age.

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[Disciples are perhaps the best persons to speak with authority on the character and personality of a great Master, although the unsympathetic critic will not attach much value to their estimates because of their supposed tendency towards exaggeration and deification. Yet it remains true that the greatness of a Master of the spiritual realm cannot be adequately depicted by any but those who have actually felt the power of his personality. Hence there is nothing that helps a study of Sri Ramakrishna as statements like the following culled out from the writings and utterances of his immediate disciples.]

I

WHEN it was that Sri Bhagavan Ramakrishna incarnated himself in India, to demonstrate what the true religion of the Aryan race is ; to show where amidst all its various divisions and off-shoots, scattered over the land in the course of its immemorial history, lies the true unity of the Hindu religion, which by its overwhelming number of sects discordant to superficial view, quarrelling constantly with one another and abounding in customs divergent in every way, has constituted itself a misleading enigma for our countrymen and the butt of contempt for foreigners ; and, above all, to hold up before men, for their lasting welfare, as a living embodiment of the Satatana Dharma, his own wonderful life into which he infused the universal spirit and character of this Dharma, so long cast into oblivion by the process of time.

"Always remember that Sri Ramakrishna came for the good of the world—not for name or fame. Spread only what he came to teach. Never mind his name—it will spread of itself."

"Once more He has come to help His children, once more the opportunity to rise is given to fallen India. India can only rise by sitting at the feet of Sri Ramakrishna."

"It took me six years to understand that Ramakrishna was not a holy man, but Holiness itself. He was the living embodiment of the Vedas, the Upanishads and other Hindu scriptures. He lived in one single life what not only the Hindu but whole human race lived spiritually for ages."

—Swami Vivekananda

II

"Such love, knowledge, dispassion and catholicity—I have not seen elsewhere. The Lord has created the Master Himself with His own hands. The power of the Lord has been embodied in him. I think, Jesus Christ, Chaitanya, and yourself (i.e. the Master) are one and the same personality."

—Mahendra Nath Gupta

III

"The Master loved each of us so dearly that everybody thought that he loved him most. With the passing of days I understand the greatness and glory of my Master. He was God in flesh and blood, and in him live all deities."

—Swami Adbhutananda

IV

"Ah, how, joyfully we lived with the Master at Dakshineswar !—And how free was I not with him! One day I was rubbing oil on his body in the semi-circular western porch. For some reason I got angry with him.

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VEDANTA KESARI

(FEB. & MAR.

I threw away the bottle of oil and strode off with the intention of never returning to him. I went out of the Temple and came near Jadu Mallik's garden-house. And then I could not proceed further. I sat down. Meanwhile he had sent R. to call me back. When I came, he said, 'Did you see? Could you go? . . .

"Once an evil thought rose in me, and as I approached the Master from a distance, he divined it and said: 'My boy, I see that an evil thought is disturbing your mind! So saying, he placed his hand on my head in blessing and uttered some words inaudibly; within five minutes it had gone."

"Another day, when I returned from Calcutta, he said: Why can I not look at you? Have you done anything wrong? No, I replied,—I had forgotten that I had told a lie. 'Did you tell any lie?' he asked me. Then I remembered that I had—"

"A true and living representation of Viveka (discrimination) and Vairagya (renunciation) we saw in Sri Ramakrishna, the Master. We read of Viveka and Vairagya in Scriptures but we saw them personified in Him. Neither in sleeping nor in waking state could Sri Ramakrishna touch a coin. What he has taught us by His own life is that there is no other path to attain God but through Tyaga (renunciation). Look at the life of Sri Ramakrishna and be a man in the best sense of the term."

To the question whether Sri Ramakrishna was still living, the Swami said in reply, "Have you gone mad? If he does not live, why should we then lead such a life, giving up our home and all? He is. Only pour out your whole heart in prayer to Him, and He will stand revealed in

His glory to you and will remove all doubts and confusions that are troubling your mind." In answer to the further question whether he used to see Sri Ramakrishna after his passing away, he said: "Yes, but only when He is pleased to reveal himself to us; then alone can we see Him. Every one can see Him through His grace. But alas! who longs to see Him? How few have that yearning!"

—Swami Brahmananda

V

"What other Upanishad would you teach them when there is the living Upanishad? The life of the Master is the living, flaming Upanishad. None could understand the meaning of the Radha-Krishna cult if Sri Chaitanya had not been born and demonstrated it in his life. Even so the Master is the living demonstration of the truths of the Upanishads. . . He never read the Upanishads or any other book. Yet how is it that he could explain those subtle and complex truths in so simple and straight a manner? If you want to read the Vedas, you have to commit its grammar to memory and read various commentaries, in which every commentator has sought to explain the texts in his own way. Innumerable scholars have been arguing over the texts without coming to any conclusion. Our Master, however, has in very simple language explained all those truths and his words are extant. When you have such a living fountain before you, why dig well for water."

—Swami Premananda

VI

"I have not yet been able to understand whether Ramakrishna was a man, a saint, a god, or God Himself,

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but I know him to be the embodiment of wisdom, love and renunciation. He was totally free from egoism. As I get more and more intimately acquainted with the spiritual realm with the passing of days, and perceive the infinite breadth and depth of the Master's character and personality, I am being firmly convinced that to compare him with God —i.e., God as we generally understand Him—will be to belittle his infinite spiritual greatness. I have seen him bestowing the love of God freely on all—men and women, the educated and the ignorant, the good and the bad. Wonderful also was his intense anxiety to relieve men of their sorrows and confer on them eternal peace through God-vision. I may declare with as much emphasis as I can command that the modern age has not seen a greater man engaged in working for the spiritual welfare of mankind, than the Master."

—Swami Sivananda

VII

"After living in the intimate company of the Master and having meditated long on his unparalleled life and character, I have been astonished to find that he was a unique combination of humanity and Divinity. Without seeing him we could never understand that such a marvellous synthesis of varied ideals and ideas is possible in one and the same personality. My conviction is that he was a God-man; his personality is an example of divine perfections and powers manifesting through the medium of a human body and mind. He belongs to that small group of God-men who are known as World-Teachers.

"The life of the Master was the solution of the national problems of

India. He has fulfilled what his predecessors left unfinished. The Master has finally solved the religious conflicts of India and of the world. His unheard-of Sadhanas have awakened the Sanatani Shakti of India for the spiritual welfare of the world."

—Swami Saradananda

VIII

"Those who went to the Paramahansa Deva were all virtuous and good-natured. His love for his young devotees who became his monk-disciples afterwards may be quite natural. But his love for me was unconditioned and is a mark of his graciousness. God as the Saviour of the sinners was beheld by me in the person of Sri Ramakrishna. Some of those who had seen and known Sri Ramakrishna may be fickle-minded but in comparison with my unsteady and restless nature they were all saints! I never liked to walk on straight paths of life. But in spite of all this I was the object of his deepest affection and grace. Oh! his love for me had no limits! He used to bring from Dakshineswar Temple to my Calcutta residence fruits and sweets offered to the Deity and feed me with his own hands. Once in Dakshineswar he fed me with Payasam offered to Mother Kali, with his own hands. When he did so I forgot that I was an adult and felt myself a child. I experienced then that it was the Divine Mother who fed me. He is now no more, but when I think of his love my heart is touched to its deepest core. I cannot dream of another mortal frame through which so much divine love can flow to fallen humanity. I never visited his death-bed, for that was unbearable to me. Wonderful was his way of teaching.

He never forbade me to do anything. From my boyhood I did just the opposite thing of what I was asked to do by my elders and superiors. Paramahansa Deva's method has proved infallible in my case. Whenever I am prompted to speak falsehood, or any evil thought arises in my mind, I see in the mind's eye my Master's face, and I naturally refrain from committing any wrong. Sri Ramakrishna is the sole tenant of my heart. That, however, is in no way due to my worth but to his grace and love. He has taken away all my sins and has made me understand what religion is."

—Girish Chandra Ghosh

IX

"It was only on Sunday that there was a crowd at the Temple ; on other days Guru Maharaj was left alone with his few chosen ones. And why did he keep them ? In order that in one night he might make them perfect. When he was alone with his special disciples, they would sing and talk and play together. If a visitor came, he would tell him : ' Go and have a bath, eat something and rest awhile.' Then about two o'clock he would begin to talk and he would go on teaching for five or six hours continuously. He would not know when to stop.

"Sometimes Guru Maharaj would wake at four in the morning and he would call all the disciples who were sleeping in his room, saying, ' What are you all doing ? Snoring ? Get up, sit on your mat and meditate.' Sometimes he would wake up at midnight, call them and make them spend the whole night singing and praising the name of the Lord.

"Ramakrishna was able to supply to every man just what he needed. Sometimes a man would come from a

distant place with his heart panting for God, but seeing the room full of people, he would shrink back and hide himself in a dim corner. Without a word Ramakrishna would walk to him and touch him and in a moment he was illumined.

"By that touch, Ramakrishna really swallowed ninety-nine per cent of the man's Karma. Taking other's Karma was the reason he had his last long illness. He used to tell us : 'The people whose Karma I have taken think that they are attaining salvation through their own strength. They do not understand that it is because I have taken their Karma on me.' We do not know how much we owe to him; but some day we shall realise what he has done for us and then we shall know how to be grateful to him.

"He never condemned any man. He was ready to excuse everything. He used to tell us that the difference between man and God was this : If a man fails to serve God ninety-nine times, but the hundredth time serves Him with even a little love, God forgets the ninety-nine times he has failed and would say : ' Oh ! My devotee has served me so well to-day.' But if a man serves another man well ninety-nine times and the hundredth time fails in his service, then man will forget the ninety-nine good services and say : ' That rascal failed to serve me one day.' So Sri Ramakrishna, if there is the least spark of goodness in any one, sees only that and overlooks all the rest.

"In Ramakrishna there was absolutely no ego left. He knew everything. Everything he did was for others. He was not necessitated to come to this world, but he came to help mankind ; and every movement of his body, every movement of his

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mind was directed towards the amelioration of his fellow-men.

"The only real enemy Sri Ramakrishna ever had was a man who was very jealous of the devotion of Mathur Babu for him. Ramakrishna was the embodiment of truthfulness. He always said : 'No man can hope to realise the Truth who is not absolutely truthful.' He practised the most perfect simplicity in his habits. His spirit of renunciation was without

reservation and compromise. One day he saw an especially fine mango and he had a mind to take it, but he could not raise his hand to pluck it. Another day he tried to pick a fruit, but with the same result. He was unable to lift his arm; the muscles refused to obey him. 'You see,' he explained 'A Sannyasin should never store anything, so the Divine Mother will not let me lay by this fruit even for a few hours.'

—Swami Ramakrishnananda

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[The following sections consist of excerpts, compilation, and abridgements of the reminiscences left by some notables who had seen and known Sri Ramakrishna personally in his life-time. None of them were his disciples, but nevertheless all of them had drawn inspiration from him. Raja Rajendralal Mitra, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, Devendranath Tagore, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and other then worthies of Bengal came in contact with him but unfortunately for us most of them have left no record of their impressions.]

I

SVINI KUMAR DATTA, the patriot-devotee of Barisal, whose Bhakti-Yoga is one of the most popular religious books in Bengali writes as follows:—

It was perhaps during the Puja Holidays of 1881 that I met Sri Ramakrishna for the first time. Keshub Sen was to come that day. I arrived at Dakshineswar by boat. When I saw him he sat leaning against a bolster facing the garden. Rajendralal Mitra sat at his right very near his pillow. A little further off sat some others. He was very anxious for Keshub who came with his party at twilight. Keshub bowed before him touching the ground with his forehead and the Master also returned the salutation in the same manner. Shortly after, he went into an exalted state of ecstasy in which he remained for some time. Keshub's heart overflowed with emotion as he looked at

Sri Ramakrishna. Seeing this state of the Master, I thought, "Can this be pretence?" I had never seen anything like it before and I am not a credulous man. Coming back from this divine mood he held a conversation with Keshub.

After an hour or so the Kirtan commenced. What I saw then, I shall probably never forget in this life or the life to come. All began to dance, Keshub included, with the Master in the centre and the others in a circle around him. In the course of the dance the Master suddenly stood motionless. He was in Samadhi! It continued for a long time. Hearing and seeing all these I understood that he was a real Paramahansa.

Another day, perhaps in 1883, I went to see him with a few young men of Serampore. Seeing them he asked me something about them. I went another day. When I bowed down to him that day and took my

seat, he asked me to bring a bottle of lemonade. I think I brought him a bottle. So far as I remember, he was alone that day. I asked him a few questions about Keshub, Sivanath and others. Then he told me a little of his religious practices at Panchavati. He also spoke about Totapuri. After telling me something about the realisation of God, he got up and stretched himself on the cot. As it was very hot, I fanned him in response to his request. While I was doing so, I exchanged a few words with him. I cannot express in words the immense pleasure I derived from his company that day.

When I paid my last visit to him on 23rd May, 1885, the Head Master of our School (the well known scholar-saint, Jagadish Mukherjee) was with me. As soon as Sri Ramakrishna saw him, he asked me about him and praised him eloquently. He also told me that my father had come and stayed with him there for three days. A little later he got up and repeating Om several times started singing a song that began, "Dive deep, dive deep, my mind in the ocean of divine beauty." He had scarcely sung the first few lines when he himself dived deep and fell into Samadhi. When Samadhi was over, he began to pace up and down the room and with both hands pulled up the cloth he was wearing till it reached the waist. One end of it was trailing on the floor and the other was hanging loose. A moment later he threw away the cloth with the words, "Ugh, what a nuisance! off with it." He sat down, still nude, on one end of his cot and began a conversation with me. He showed us the pictures in his room and asked if a picture of Lord Buddha could be had and requested me to

bring one for himself. But alas! I never had the opportunity, because I never met him after that. I met the Master only four or five times. Ah! how happily I spent those few days with him. In that short time we became so intimate that I felt as if we had been class-mates. How much liberty I took while speaking with him! But no sooner had I left his presence than it flashed on me, "Great God! With whom was I speaking?" My whole life has been sweetened by what I received in those few days. The memory of that Elysian smile is still with me, shedding unending bliss.

II

Pratap Chandra Majoomdar, an influential leader of the Brahmo Samaj, wrote as follows in the *Theistic Quarterly Review* of 1897 :

My mind is still floating in the luminous atmosphere which that wonderful man diffuses around him whenever and wherever he goes. My mind is not yet disenchanted of the mysterious and indefinable pathos which he pours into it whenever he meets me. What was there in common between him and me? I, a Europeanised, self-centred, semi-sceptical so-called educated reasoner, and he, a poor, illiterate, friendless Hindu devotee? I who have listened to Disraeli and Fawcett, Stanley and Max Muller and a whole host of European scholars and divines. Why should I be spell-bound to hear him. And it is not I only but dozens like me who do the same. Some of our clever intellectual fools have found nothing in him; some of the contemptuous Christian Missionaries would call him an impostor or a self-deluded enthusiast. The face of this Hindu saint retains a fulness, a child-like tenderness, a profound visible humble-

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ness and an unspeakable sweetness of expression and a smile that I have seen on no other face than that I can remember. He protests against being lionized and openly shows his strong dislike to be visited and praised by the curious. The society of the worldly-minded and carnally-inclined he carefully shuns. His religion is his only recommendation. Ramakrishna is the worshipper of no particular Hindu God. He is not a Shaiva, he is not a Shakta, he is not a Vaishnava, he is not a Vedantist. Yet he is all these. He worships Shiva, he worships Kali, he worships Rama, he worships Krishna and is a confirmed advocate of the Vedanta doctrines. He accepts all the doctrines, all the embodiments, usages and devotional practices of every religious cult. Each in turn is infallible to him. His religion does not mean too much dogma, controversial proficiency or the outward worship. His religion means ecstasy, his worship means transcendental worship. He merges into rapturous ecstasy, and loses outward consciousness often during the day and oftenest in conversation.

In the intensity of burning love of God which is in his simple heart, the devotees' form and features suddenly grow stiff and motionless, unconsciousness overtakes him, his eyes lose their sight and tears trickle down his fixed, pale but smiling face. There is a transcendental meaning and sense in that unconsciousness. Who will fathom the depth of that insensibility which the love of God produces in him? But that he sees something here and enjoys something, when he is dead to all the outer world, there is no doubt. If not, why should he in the midst of that unconsciousness burst into floods of tears and break

out into prayers, songs and utterances, the force and pathos of which pierce through the hardest heart and bring tears to eyes that never before wept under the influence of religion?

He has successfully escaped the evil of carnality which he dreaded. The purity of his thoughts and relations towards women is most unique and instructive. The other sin which he spent his life to be free from is the love of money. The sight of money fills him with strange dread. His avoidance of women and wealth is the whole secret of his matchless moral character. His reverence for Christ and Mahomet is deep and genuine and shows the catholic religious culture of this great Hindu saint. He never writes anything, seldom argues. He never attempts to instruct, he is continually pouring out his soul in rhapsody of spiritual experiences. He unconsciously throws a flood of marvellous light upon the obscurest passages of the Shastras.

A living evidence of the depth and greatness of Hindu religion is this good and holy man. He has wholly controlled his flesh. He is full of soul, full of the reality of religion, full of joy, full of blessed purity. He has no other thought, no other occupation, no other relation, no other friend in his humble life than his God. That God is more than sufficient for him. His spotless holiness, his deep unspeakable blessedness, his unstudied endless wisdom, his child-like peacefulness and affection towards all men, his consuming, all-absorbing love for God is his only reward. So long as he is spared to us, gladly shall we sit at his feet to learn from him the sublime precepts of purity, unworldliness,

spirituality and inebriation in the love of God.

III

Pandit Shivanath Shastri, a leader of Brahmo Samaj, wrote in the *Modern Review* for October 1910, to this effect :

My personal acquaintance with Ramakrishna Paramahansa happened in the year 1875. A friend, after his visits, would relate to me the strange sayings and doings of a Hindu mendicant. Some of these sayings seemed so remarkable to me that one day I accompanied my friend to see him. He was not known to fame then, which came to him afterwards, when the late Keshub Chandra Sen began to visit him and to publish the accounts of his visits in his papers.

I do not remember the things he said during our first interview but I vividly recollect that he received me very warmly. He said to me again and again in his well-known, open-hearted, simple and child-like manner, "Will you come to me now and then?" After repeated visits he began to unbosom his experiences to me.

He had attained to a state of perfection the like of which was seldom seen. The idea that struck him most and had an abiding influence on his mind was to avoid as poison Kamini-Kanchan or woman and wealth as the most effective way of ensuring spiritual detachment. His efforts to rise above the attractions of women and gold were very peculiar. I was personally present on occasions when pieces of coin were placed in his hand by an enquiring visitor, as an experiment, and the saint fell into his usual fits (?) and did not come back to consciousness until the pieces of coin were removed from the hand.

In fact the impressions left in my mind by intercourse with him was that I had seldom come across any other man in whom the hunger and thirst for spiritual life was so great and who had gone through so many privations and sufferings for the practice of religion. Secondly I was convinced that he was no longer a Sadhak or a devotee under exercise but was a Siddha Purusha or one who had attained direct vision of spiritual truth. He passed away leaving behind him a memory that is now spiritually feeding hundreds of earnest souls. My acquaintance with him, though short, was fruitful by strengthening many a spiritual thought in me. I owe him a debt of gratitude for the sincere affection he bore towards me. He was certainly one of the most remarkable personalities I have come across in life.

Let me now proceed to relate some incidents expressive of the saints' personal affection for me. On one occasion he had been sending repeated messages to me, asking me to come and see him but I was being detained by Brahmo Samaj work till at last he turned up at my house one day. On another occasion he had been invited to be present at a Brahmo Festival held in a garden-house at Dum-Dum. I arrived a little late. Upon my arrival I found him standing and singing in the midst of a crowd of people. As soon as he saw me, he clasped me to his bosom, declaring, "Oh my bosom is now soothed." After that, his proceedings went on with unusual fervour and enthusiasm. On a third occasion he seemed to be equally surprised to find me coming after a long time. So great was his delight that he fainted away from excess of emotion. When able to

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speak again he broached to me the proposal of accompanying him to the Zoological Garden. The manner in which he expressed his joy at the thought of seeing the lion was charming in its simplicity. At last it was so arranged and a carriage was brought. But while in the carriage, seated though he was, he began to make a sort of dancing movements, as a mark of his great pleasure. At this point there came on his trance, and then I witnessed a scene that I shall never forget. His whole countenance was aglow with a strange spiritual light. He became thoroughly unconscious, leaning on my arm for some minutes. During the last few years of the saint's life my visits became less frequent than they were before. At last when the news of his fast declining health was brought to me one day, I left all work and went to Dakshineswar. He took me to task for neglecting him. I pleaded guilty to the charge. That was my last interview with him.

IV

Mr. Nagendranath Gupta, famous journalist and late editor of the *Tribune*, the well-known daily of Lahore, wrote in the *Modern Review* and the *Prabuddha Bharata*, his reminiscences of Sri Ramakrishna, the substance of which is as follows:—

Men assign without hesitation the highest place to the teachers of humanity, the men who show the path that lead Godward. Among these is the assured place of Ramakrishna Paramahansa. He began his life by both justifying and upsetting Carlyle's theory that the greatest men were born before no books were written. If, however, he had a distaste for books, he was avid about everything pertaining to religion. But in all he

read very little, and could not be called an educated man. And yet in his crude form of speech he expressed thoughts which amazed and delighted his hearers, including several highly cultured persons in Bengal. Many of his sayings have become familiar as household words.

In fact, he practised with full faith and conviction every form of worship that came to his knowledge or of which he heard, and he accepted every religion as a path to salvation. Ramakrishna used to pass frequently into a state of Samadhi, and while in this state he was unconscious of his surroundings but his countenance was lit up with ineffable rapture and beatitude. He invariably spoke of himself with utmost humility and usually avoided using the first person singular.

Following the distinguished lead of Keshub Sen, other men of note began visiting the Paramahansa. The papers controlled by Keshub published some of his sayings and drew attention to the saintliness of his character. P. C. Majoondar of the Brahmo Samaj, a man of high intellectual attainments, wrote several articles remarkable for the eloquence and expressiveness of warm admiration. Sivanath Shastri and Vijaya K. Goswami were frequent visitors to the Paramahansa.

His aversion to woman and wealth was so great that the mere touch of gold or silver twisted and paralysed his fingers. He turned in disgust from worldly wealth but he was never tired of acquiring the wealth of the spiritual world, and never rested till his treasure-house was full to overflowing. Humble as was the life of Ramakrishna, he never made any distinction between

one man and another, between a wealthy and titled person and a poor, obscure individual. He designated every man, Raja or Maharaja, eminent writer or famous man, by name, and was always outspoken in his expressions of opinion. Bankim Chandra, the famous writer, was reprobated for his ill-timed and indecorous levity while conversing with Ramakrishna. So were Maharaja Jatindra Mohan Tagore and Kristo Das Pal for their assumption of superiority. Dr. Mahendralal Sarkar, a learned scientist and the leading physician of Calcutta, was strongly attracted by Ramakrishna whom he treated in his last illness. He used to spend hours listening to the marvellous conversation of his patient and was fascinated by the inexhaustive flow of the Truth from the lips of Ramakrishna. Ramakrishna, uninstructed even in the speech of gentle folk, spoke often, even as the Buddha or the Christ spoke, out of the radiance of his own wisdom. Earlier teachers taught love and compassion for all men and even for all creatures having life. Ramakrishna Paramahansa added love and respect for all religions. He characterised the desire to perform even minor miracles as evidence of a low mind. Why should any miracles be attributed to him? I saw the main miracle of his self-luminance and listened to the outflow of the welling spring of wisdom that never ran dry. His gospel is not a new creed and he does not seek to set up a new religion. It is a note of peace in the conflict of the many contending religions of the world. It is the living faith of Universalism. He is the confluence of various streams of all the religions

of the world, each one retaining its identity and distinctiveness.

In 1881 I had the good fortune to be included in the party of Keshub on board a steam yacht to meet Ramakrishna. All the talking was practically done by Ramakrishna. It is now more than forty-five years ago that this happened and yet everything that the Paramahansa said is indelibly impressed on my memory. I have never heard any other man speak as he did. It was an unbroken flow of profound spiritual truths and experiences welling up from the perennial spring of his own devotion and wisdom. The similes and metaphors, and the apt illustrations were as striking as they were original. Then he began to speak of Nirakar Brahman. He repeated the word Nirakar two or three times and then quietly passed into Samadhi as the diver slips into the fathomless deep. We intently watched him in Samadhi; his whole body relaxed and then became slightly rigid. There was no twitching of the muscles or nerves, no movement of any limb; both his hands lay in his lap with the fingers lightly interlocked. The sitting posture of the body was easy but absolutely motionless. The face was slightly tilted up and in repose. The eyes were nearly but not wholly closed. They were fixed and conveyed no message of outer objects to the brain. The lips were parted in a beatific and indescribable smile. There was something in that wonderful smile which no photograph was ever able to reproduce. After some time he opened his eyes and looked around him as if he were in a strange place.

He was practically an unlettered man like some prophets of old. It

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may be said with absolute truth that he was one of the elect who appear at long intervals in the world for some great purpose. It has been my privilege to hear him speak and I felt then, as I feel now, that it is only rarely that men have the great good fortune of listening to such a man."

V

Rev. Girish Chandra Sen, a colleague of Keshub Chandra Sen and a leading Brahmo missionary, writes in his Bengali book "Sayings of Ramakrishna Paramahansa and his Life in Brief," published by the Brahmo Samaj in 1886, (now out of print) as follows : —

Ramakrishna lived in a secluded spot in a room of a one-storeyed house on the banks of the Ganges at the farthest end of the group of temples which go by the name of Dakshineswar Devalaya. He seldom visited any place except his own home where even he went on rare occasions only. Having returned to Dakshineswar from a pilgrimage in the company of one Mathura Babu, he became totally absorbed in meditation and was lost in spiritual rapture. He was absorbed in the spirit and was scarcely visited by people ; nor was he much known to the public. The people of the adjacent villages took him for a mad man.

In March 1875 one day at about 8 or 9 A.M. Ramakrishna came to the garden of Jayagoyal Sen at Belghoria where Acharya Keshub Chandra with his missionary friends was staying for the purpose of Sadhan and Bhajan. When Ramakrishna arrived there in a hackney carriage, Keshub with his companions was just making preparations for his daily

a single piece of red bordered Dhoti only. He had no shirt or Chuddar. The end of the Dhoti was flung across his shoulders. His body was much emaciated and he looked rather weak. The missionary friends of Keshub at first took him for an ordinary man. Ramakrishna addressed the party thus : "I have heard that you have seen God. I am anxious to know what He is like."

Thus started the discourse on religious topics. Then Ramakrishna sang a hymn from Ramprasad and immediately fell into a trance. Those present there did not think much of it. At that time they thought it was affectation. His faithful attendant Hriday however, started uttering loudly the sacred symbolic word 'OM' and invited the others to do the same. This brought Ramakrishna round to partial consciousness and he began to laugh, and then followed a stream of inspiring words from him. This astounded the missionary friends who thus realised that he was a man of God and not an ordinary human being. The party, engrossed in his sweet company for the time being forgot altogether about their ablutions and prayers and devotions which they performed later on.

A devotee can at once know another devotee. Keshub was charmed and was attracted towards Paramahansa and the latter in his turn was closely drawn to Keshub. Thenceforward a close intimacy grew up between these two souls. Keshub with his party began to visit Ramakrishna often, and Ramakrishna with Hriday used to come to Keshub's place. On Ramakrishna's arrival a big crowd would usually gather round him, and in it could be noticed the relatives, friends and neighbours of Keshub.

Ramakrishna was plainly dressed in



At their meetings several hours were occupied in talks on different topics of religious interest culminating in the enjoyment of an intense spiritual fellowship. At the end of the celebrations of the Brahmo Samaj Keshub used to go every year with his co-workers and other Brahmos to Ramakrishna by steamer or boat ; or Keshub used to send a conveyance for Ramakrishna to take him to the Tapovan at Belgharia. To talk with Ramakrishna on spiritual matters and to make merriment with him became part and parcel of the programme of the annual Utsab (celebration).

It was the life of Paramahansa that intensified the culture of devotion to God as Mother, in the Brahmo Samaj. To call upon God by the sweet name of Mother as a simple child does, to pray to her and crave her indulgence like a child—this habit our minister (Keshub Chandra) received in a special way from the influence of Paramahansa.

Notwithstanding the element of Bhakti to be found in Brahmo religion, it was predominantly a religion of faith, rationalism and dry disputations. The shadow of the life of Ramakrishna rendered it moist, fresh and sweet. It must be admitted that the meeting (between Keshub and Ramakrishna) was quite providential. At this time such a contact was for the Brahmo Samaj Sadhaks a necessity. There was no doubt that his (Ramakrishna's) exalted life in which Yoga and Bhakti predominated was used by Providence for helping the development of the Navavidhan Brahmo Samaj. Keshub was wont to sit by Ramakrishna's side just like a humble disciple and a younger brother, and listen to his utterances with humility, reverence and loving

tenderness. Keshub never entered into any controversy with him. He assimilated to the fullest extent all that was good in Paramahansa's life, and made those his own. On many occasions, before leaving for Paramahansa's place he sat for saying his prayer at his family sanctuary. When we, Brahmos, used to visit Dakshineswar, Paramahansa Dev would not allow us to leave his place without partaking of some refreshments. Paramahansa Dev also used to take something whenever he paid a visit to Keshub's place. During Keshub's last illness Ramakrishna came to see him once and both of them talked on profoundly spiritual topics for some time. By his writings in the organs of the Brahmo Samaj and in books, Keshub was the first to give publicity to the ideals and personality of the Paramahansa. His sayings were published by Keshub in a booklet.

Paramahansa Dev had a wonderful power of studying human nature. Even from a glance at a man or by exchanging a few words with him he could ascertain of what stuff he was made. He never joined in the Divine Service of our Brahmo Samaj. How could he ? For he would fall into a trance even before the Service commenced. Ramakrishna was really as simple and artless as a child.

When the dead body of Ramakrishna was brought for cremation to the burning Ghat, about 150 persons came up from Calcutta and took part in the funeral ceremony. His disciples and admirers carried the profusely decorated bier on their shoulders, followed by a Sankirtan party and a procession of many leading Brahmos. The emblems of the Hindu religion, i.e., the Trident, the Spud of the Buddhists, the Crescent

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of the Moslems and the Cross of the Christians were carried in front of the procession. Trailokyanath Sanyal (Ramakrishna was fond of his sweet songs when alive), seated by the side of his lifeless body, sang several songs, suited to the occasion. The eyes of Ramakrishna were still partly open, and his face was slightly smiling which showed that he breathed his last while in communion with God. At sunset the corpse was consumed by the burning flames of the pyre on which sandal-wood mixed with ghee was put. His devoted disciples set fire to the body as so many sons of their spiritual father. We were very pleased to witness the respect and devotion shown to this God-filled man by so many educated young men. Many missionaries of the Navavidhan Brahmo Samaj observed

mourning for three or four days and ate Havisyanna (boiled rice and vegetables) only.

Ramakrishna's modesty was wonderful. He would salute a visitor before the latter could do it. He did not like that his sayings appeared in print or were published in newspapers. Nor did he like that a photo of his be taken. It was only when absorbed in meditation that he could successfully be photographed. Such a man is a vivid example of Divine grace. Such a life inspires hope to a drowning soul in the dark ocean of life and guides many into the port like a light-house. We have read about great men like Chaitanya and others in books but we were fortunate enough to come into direct contact with Ramakrishna and to read his saintly life.

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[In the last section we gave extracts about Sri Ramakrishna from the writings of those who knew him personally but were not his disciples. Here are some extracts showing how leading thinkers of the age view Sri Ramakrishna. Except Keshab Chander Sen, none of the other thinkers included here saw him personally. The extracts have been selected from the writings of famous men of both the East and the West in order to show how the ideas of the Master are spreading everywhere. To represent the view of the conservative section of Hindus, we have also included here a recent utterance of Swami Jayendra Puriji, an ascetic of the orthodox way of life and thought!]

I

In a recent and unique example, in the life of Ramakrishna Paramahansa we see a colossal spiritual capacity first driving straight to the divine realisation, taking, as it were, the Kingdom of Heaven by violence, and then seizing upon one Yoga method after another and extracting the substance out of it with an incredible rapidity, always to return to the heart of the whole matter, the realisation and possession of God by the

power of love, by the extension of in-born spirituality into various experience and by the spontaneous play of an intuitive knowledge. Such an example cannot be generalised. Its object also was special and temporal, to exemplify in the great and decisive experience of a Master-soul the truth, now most necessary to humanity, towards which a world long divided into jarring sects and schools is with difficulty labouring, that all sects are forms and fragments of a



single integral truth and all disciplines labour in their different ways towards one supreme experience. To know, be and possess the Divine is the one thing needful and it includes or leads up to all the rest. . . all the rest that the Divine Will chooses for us, all necessary form and manifestation, will be added.

—*Sri Aurobindo (in his "The Synthesis of Yoga" in the Arya No. 5.)*

II

The story of Ramakrishna Paramahansa's life is a story of religion in practice. His life enables us to see God face to face. No one can read the story of his life without being convinced that God alone is real and that all else is an illusion. Ramakrishna was a living embodiment of godliness. His sayings are not those of a mere learned man but they are pages from the Book of Life.

They are revelations of his own experiences. They therefore leave on the reader an impression which he cannot resist. In this age of scepticism Ramakrishna presents an example of a bright and living faith which give solace to thousands of men and women who would otherwise have remained without spiritual light. His love knew no limits, geographical or otherwise.

—*Mahatma Gandhi*

III

When we recollect the great covenants of Eastern Wisdom, a luminous example from our contemporary life stands before us. Giants of Enlightenment are outstanding—the Blessed Ramakrishna and the fiery Vivekananda. What an unforgettable example of Blessed Hierarchy ! There is no literate country where these great

names together with those of Abhedananda, Premananda, Brahmananda, Saradananda and other glorious names of the Ramakrishna Order are not cherished. The Blessed Bhagawan Ramakrishna is bringing from the Himalayan heights the symbol of OM. His yellow robe is furling in the wind, His feet touch the white snows, but gloriously. He proceeds to manifest to Humanity the greatest bliss. Stormy clouds indicate the upheavals and distress of Humanity but great and shiny is the halo round the Blessed Bhagawan's head and He carries His great Mission as a light-bringing beacon.

—*Nicholas Roerich*

IV

It is needless to add with how much love and respect I associate my humble name with the great name of the Superman. Above all he was a rare combination of individuality and universality, personality and impersonality. His word and example have been echoed in the hearts of Western men and women.

More than once I had recited from memory, though imperfectly, the lesson of thought learned at some former time (but from whom ? one of my very ancient selves. . .). Now I re-read it, every word clear and complete, in the book of life held out to me by the illiterate genius who knew all its pages by heart—Ramakrishna.

It is always the same Book. It is always the same man—the Son of Man, the Eternal, Our Son, Our God reborn. With each return he reveals himself a little more fully, and more enriched by the universe.

Allowing for differences of country and of time Ramakrishna is the younger brother of our Christ.

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I am bringing to Europe, as yet unaware of it, the fruit of a new autumn, a new message of the Soul, the symphony of India, bearing the name of Ramakrishna.

The man whose image I here evoke was the consummation of two thousand years of the spiritual life of three hundred million people. Although he has been dead forty years, his soul animates modern India. He was no hero of action like Gandhi, no genius in art or thought like Goethe or Tagore. He was a little village Brahmin of Bengal whose outer life was set in a limited frame without striking incident, outside the social and political activity of the time. But his inner life embraced the whole multiplicity of men and Gods. It was a part of the very source of Energy, the Divine Shakti, of whom Vidyapati, the old poet of Mithila, and Ramprasad of Bengal sing.

—*Romain Rolland (in his "Life of Ramakrishna," etc.)*

The story of Sri Ramakrishna is really a story of inner life. The life of this Man of Realisation, this Messenger from the mystic Realm of the Spirit, has, I believe, an abiding value. For in his life, as in the lives of prophets and saints, hath shone the Light Eternal. A spiritual genius, Ramakrishna was a union of the mystic, prophet and saint. He has inherited immortality. He belongs to the Temple of the Future. Not yet have we known him well. Not yet has the world realised his true greatness.

I love to think of Ramakrishna as the Child-Man of the 19th century. He was a simple child of the Divine Mother. He was simple, artless, spontaneous, humble, child-like.

Therefore he lives. Therefore his influence grows. Our big man, distinguished to-day, is extinguished tomorrow.

Ramakrishna, born in a little village, now belongs to Humanity. We look to-day in wonderment and marvel at his spiritual stature, as we would at a mountain height. Wonderful, his life; wonderful, his words! The sayings of Ramakrishna! How rich in thought and reflection! How pregnant in wisdom! How vital in their appeal and inspiration! How fragrant with true mysticism! The sayings of the Saint have a beauty born of meditation. In his message of one Religion in all religions, of the one Spirit in all prophets, and the one Divine Life in all Humanity may Hindus and Muslims come together, to serve India.

—*T. V. Vaswani (in his "Sri Ramakrishna")*

VI

As Sri Ramakrishna's heart and mind were for all countries, his name too is the common property of mankind. All nations of the world—at least those which transcending the racial and national barriers believe in the Divinity of man—can be united.

—*Sylvain Levi*

VII

The fervent love of God, nay, the sense of complete absorption in God-head, has nowhere found a stronger and more eloquent expression than in the utterances of Ramakrishna. They show the exalted nature of his faith. How deep he has seen into the mysteries of knowledge and love of God we see from his sayings.

—*F. Max Muller (in his "Life and Sayings of Ramakrishna")*

VIII

Ramakrishna is the fulfilment of Hinduism. He embodied the soul of Hinduism. Verily the history of the world is but the biography of such great men. The lives of such great men also affect, more deeply than those of sovereigns, the lives of their contemporaries. All the essentials and fundamentals of Hinduism were fully exemplified and embodied in Sri Ramakrishna.

Ramakrishna did not confine the light he attained, the wisdom he won, to himself but he sought to impart the benefits of the same to others as well. The volume of his unique teachings bring out the social aspect of his transcendental greatness. We see in them a supreme anxiety to make his individual attainment a matter of common possession to all mankind, and an infinite patience to human frailties.

In the society of men there are some who represent its spiritual dynamos and boilers, its storage and reservoir of moral power that vitalises and moves society, breathes into it life and strength and, like the electrical power-house of a city, brings light to every heart. Sri Ramakrishna too was such a spiritual power-station of his nation to serve the needs of its true well-being. We may notice in Ramakrishna, another characteristic of spiritual fulfilment, viz., an abounding charity and sympathy for human suffering. The form of tribute which will be most acceptable to him is our most earnest endeavour to be his worthy disciples, to reproduce him in our several lives and to keep up the stream of culture that emanated from him so that instead of being arrested

or dried up it may continue to fertilise the spiritual soil of the country.

—Dr. Radhakumud Mukherjee,
(in his "Hindu Principles of Self-Culture")

IX

We met one sincere Hindu devotee, Ramakrishna Paramahansa, and were charmed by the depth, penetration and simplicity of his spirit. The never-ceasing metaphors and analogies in which he indulged are most of them as apt as they are beautiful. The characteristics of his mind are the very opposite to those of Pandit Dayanand Saraswati, the former being so gentle, tender and contemplative, as the latter is sturdy, masculine and polemical. Hinduism must have in it a deep sense of beauty, truth and good to inspire such men as these.

—Keshub Chander Sen (in the "Indian Mirror" of 1875)

X

Sri Ramakrishna was the supreme representative of modern spiritual India. There is none, I believe, among the careful students of various branches of spiritual thought and culture of India who will not take part in the moral duty of celebrating his centenary.

—Dr. Walter Schubring, Professor of Indology, Hamburg University, Germany

XI

Few men have made deeper impress upon the mind of Bengal (why not of India?) in recent years than Gndadhar Chatterji, known as Ramakrishna Paramahansa, and his chief disciple Narendra Nath Dutt, better known under the title of Swami Vivekananda. At a time when the craze for the ideas and ways of the West

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was at its height, these men stood for the ancient ideal of the East, for renunciation in an age of megalomania, for simplicity at a time when discoveries in mechanical science were making life elaborately complex.

He (Ramakrishna) was no scholar, yet he possessed the power of attracting to himself men of light and leading of the day—Keshub Chunder Sen, Pundit Iswar Vidyasagar, Bankim Chatterji and Protap Chandra Majumdar amongst others. . . By temperament he was a mystic rather than a philosopher. The narrative of his life and teaching recalls inevitably the emotional figure of Chaitanya . . . His knowledge of God was intuitive and he never felt the need of systematic study. . . Apparent contradictions were nothing to him. God is the Absolute, the One, the All, the Brahman of the philosopher. But that does not prevent Him from manifesting himself in different aspects in his relations with the phenomenal world—as Krishna in His aspect of Divine love, as Kali in His aspect of creator of the universe and saviour of mankind.

Ramakrishna did not dissent from the monistic explanation of the universe. It was only that he was driven by temperament to attach far greater importance to the Personal Aspect of God. The Absolute of Sankara could be realised; but only in perfect Samadhi. . . But when a man returned from Samadhi he became a differentiated ego once more, and was thrown back upon the world of relativity so that he perceived the world-system (Maya) as real. Why? Because with the return of his egoity he was convinced that he as an individual was real; and, "so long as his ego is real to him (real relatively)

the world is real too, and the Absolute is unreal (unreal relatively)." He laid constant stress upon this. . . And since Samadhi was not achieved by the average man, he must meditate upon and commune with the Personal God, for "so long as you are a person you cannot conceive of, think or perceive God otherwise as a Person."

Many of the young men who flocked to the temple at Dakshineswar in the eighties of the last century are preaching the gospel of the Master. Those who, following his example, have adopted the path of renunciation have established a monastic order. . . Some of these men I have met at Belur Math. And having met them I know that it is for no colourless abstraction that they have renounced the world. Whether known as *Saguna Brahman* (God Personal) or as *Nirguna Brahman* (God Impersonal), it is to them the sole reality, the ultimate goal towards which sooner or later all mankind must direct its steps.

—Lord Ronaldshay (in his "*Heart of Agyavarta*")

XII

Ramakrishna's was a magically plastic, sensitive, receptive, impressionable disposition. He had a special capacity for entering into and becoming other persons—living, dynamic, symbolical. His soul took on instantly each of the beings whom he saw or imagined, and he had a genius for expressing the soul of others. He was a born artist, a great lover of beauty and of his fellow-men, and he was himself most lovable, with an attractive smile and charming voice.. From that time ecstasies became more frequent. And an occasion came when, as he said, he was torn with unutter-

able anguish at the thought that he might never be granted the blessing of the Divine vision, and then lo ! the whole scene changed and he saw an ocean of Spirit, boundless and dazzling. . . Round him rolled an ocean of ineffable joy ; and in the depths of his being he was conscious of the presence of the Divine Mother. . . Beyond it he reached the state of Nirvikalpa Samadhi. . . the soul was lost in self, dualism was blotted out. Finite and infinite space were as one. Beyond word, beyond thought, he had attained Brahma. . .

Shattering as must have been the impact of the spirit upon Ramakrishna and emaciated as was his body, it is said of him that he was like a spiritual dynamo conveying a kind of electric shock, that contact with him gave a sudden access of power, causing each to attain his ideal at a bound. And what is further remarkable about Ramakrishna is the deep impression he made upon leading Indians of his time. He could scarcely read. He knew no English. But he could read men and men could read him. . . And the leading Hindus of to-day, including men of affairs like the Delegates to the Round-Table Conference, have the deepest reverence for him. Frail and delicately sensitive as he was, he has exerted a profound influence upon modern India. And his influence has been an uplifting power raising men on to a higher level.

—Sir Francis Younghusband (in his "Living Universe")

XIII

Not that Buddhism ignored charity. On the contrary it recommended it in the most exalted terms. And it joined example to precept. But it

lacked warmth and glow. . . Let us add—and it comes perhaps to the same thing—that it did not believe in the efficacy of human action. It had no faith in such action. And faith alone can grow to power and move mountains. A complete mysticism would have reached this point. It is perhaps to be met with in India, but much later (?). That enthusiastic charity, that mysticism comparable to the mysticism of Christianity, we find in a Ramakrishna or a Vivekananda, to take only the most recent examples. But Christianity, and this is just the point, had come into the world in the interval. . . Since it has impregnated the whole of Western civilisation, one breathes it, like a perfume, in everything which this civilisation brings in its wake. Industrialism itself, as we shall try to prove, springs indirectly from it. And it was industrialism, it was our Western civilisation which liberated the mysticism of a Ramakrishna or a Vivekananda (?).

—Henri Bergson (in his "Two Sources of Morality and Religion")

XIV

In Ramakrishna we find the manifestation of the same divinity which according to the ancient tradition of India comes in fulfilment of the demands of different ages. Sri Ramakrishna in his life practically proved that every faith is a path to God and we should find Siva in every 'Jiva'. Even today, his followers by their wonderful humanitarian activities—selfless services to all irrespective of caste, creed and colour—are but following in the footsteps of the great saint, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, who is worshipped by many in the East and the West.

—Swami Jayendra Puriji

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By Sri Aurobindo

[In continuation of the foregoing section, giving extracts of the views of leading thinkers of the age on Sri Ramakrishna, we are reproducing the following article by Sri Aurobindo, originally published in the "Karmayogin" of 1909, and later reprinted in the *Amrita Basar Patrika* of March 15, 1932. A true spiritual genius alone can understand and appreciate a personage of Sri Ramakrishna type. In the following reflections, written with that true understanding and insight, Sri Aurobindo, the renowned sage and thinker of Pondicherry, draws our attention to the national and spiritual significance of the Master's advent. On the 100th birth-day anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna, which falls on the 24th of February, these reflections on the advent of the Master will be read with interest.]

THE 'Utsab' of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa is an event that annually stirs Calcutta to its depths. Year after year the number increases, of those who believe that the birth of the sage of Dakshineswar has been the critical event of the present age in India. Some believe this, for one reason; others for another. The devotee sees in him the last of the Avatars. The historian sees the key-stone of the idea that constitutes Hinduism. The partisan feels that he satisfies all parties and conflicts with none. The philosopher finds him the living embodiment of the highest Vedanta. And even amongst the workers, there are some who derive from the spectacle of his birth the faith that inspires and sanctions all their struggles.

For, a nationalist may be described as one who believes that the light has already shone upon us. He is not waiting for someone to arrive, for God to remember His India or for the leader of the age and the heroes to be born. In the eyes of the nationalist, all this has been done for us already, and it remains for us to work out the trust laid upon us. We have every opportunity that a people ever had. We have nothing more to ask for, nothing more to

wait for. Ours is only to love, work and suffer, and struggle unto the last with all our might, secure in the conviction that the great Power which bore us all will bear others also.

Some such faith is an absolute necessity, to those who pledge themselves to a cause for life and for death. Our own action is limited and guided by our own vision, our own opinion, our own knowledge. Others, with a different or defective experience, act variously; some in ways of which we do not approve, some in ways that are proved mistaken, and others by methods that are mutually destructive. A certain hope and joy is essential to all work. It would take a Titan like Bhishma himself, to throw his whole heart into a losing cause, a cause that he knew belonged neither to God nor to future. Mere mortals are not so made. The nation-maker, therefore, works to his utmost; but he must be free to realise that while every little depends on him, his work achieves significance only from that immense current of destiny that is working through him and his efforts, and that whatever outward form it might take, it would, so long as it was whole-hearted and sincere, be carried in the self-same way, on that self-same stream.

In other words, behind the best work lies a super-consciousness—knowledge that the work itself is not the great thing but the spirit that speaks in it. It is the purpose of help and redemption, the pitying love, the steadfast hope, that determines the value of the act. The deed itself, the work performed, is merely apparent, and does not count in comparison with the thought-force sent out and the spiritual energy generated. God is working through many people to-day in different ways; and though mistakes may entail suffering—and hatred is a mistake—yet even these defects cannot retard the onward march of what has been begun.

Are we then to condemn no one? Are all to be held equally useful, equally valuable, since, whether they will or not, God works through all equally? Is the renegade to be pardoned, and the traitor treated as saint? Very much the contrary. We are not to ask that a man stands with us, we are always to demand that he stands with God. Here there must be no slackness. The politician and extremist, the religious and the Swadeshi worker, the social reformer and the ultra-orthodox can all co-operate, as long as they can heartily respect each other's characters. Integrity is the only possible foundation for common faith and work. Once let the character be found questionable, however, and the worker is better passed on one side. If the heart of a man be divided in its allegiance, that man is not the mouthpiece of God. Honest conviction and sincerity of purpose are all that is necessary but conversely, we cannot be too stern and clear in our condemnation of dishonesty,

or indecency.

Nationality will be the synthesis of all righteous forms of effort, but it has neither hope nor heaven to offer to the man who makes and teaches a lie. On the one side infinite charity, on the other unrelenting condemnation. Idling is bad enough in the day of our need and opportunity. But deceit and falsehood of intention are not to be condoned.

A lie that we often hear is the lazy man's promise that God will some day send us an Avatar to rouse and aid us. These are the fallacies of sluggards, who would fain turn over in their comfortable beds and dream that they are safe. Face to face with the great life of Dakshineswar, it is difficult to put up with such fatuous self-assurance. Said the pots, discussing their future destiny and alarmed at the prospect of possible breakage, "Tush! the potter is a good fellow! It will be well!" Of this quality is the faith of the man who is looking for a future divine revelation before he stirs. The revelation will come. The world throbs with such hourly. But it will pass the slumberer by. "Rascal!" said Tota Puri to—"fire is burning before your door and you have come to the sands of the Narvada for heat?" The world cannot bear a second birth like that of Ramakrishna Paramahansa in five hundred years. The mass of thought that he has left, has to be transformed fast into experience; the spiritual energy given forth has to be converted into achievement. Until this is done, what right have we to ask for more?

Religion always, in India, precedes national awakenings. Sankaracharya was the beginning of a wave that swept round the country culminating in Chaitanya in Bengal, the Sikh

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Gurus in the Punjab, Sivaji in Maharashtra and Ramanuja and Madhwacharya in the South. Through each of these a people sprang into self-realisation, into national energy and consciousness of their own unity. Sri Ramakrishna represents a synthesis i.e. one person between all the leaders. It follows that the movements of his age will unify and organise the more provincial fragmentary movements of the past.

Ramakrishna Paramahansa is the epitome of the whole. His was the great super-conscious life which alone can witness to the infinitude of the current that bears us all oceanwards. He is the proof of the Power behind us, and the future before us. So great

a birth initiates great happenings. Many are to be tried as by fire, and not a few will be found to be pure gold; but whatever happens, whether victory or defeat, speedy fulfilment or prolonged struggle, the fact that he has been born and lived here in our midst, in the sight and memory of men now living is proof that

God hath sounded for the trumpet

That shall never call retreat!
He is sifting out the hearts of
men

Before His Judgment seat;
Oh, be swift my Soul, to answer
Him!

Be jubilant, my feet,
While God is marching on!

SRI RAMAKRISHNA MOVEMENT AT HOME—I

(ITS IDEAS AND IDEALS)

By N. Kasturi, M.A., B.L.

[The writer is a lecturer in history in the Maharaja's College, Mysore. He is also a close friend of the Movement and a worker in its cause. In the following article he gives a very effective presentation of the ideas for which the Movement stands.]

The last decades of the nineteenth century witnessed the discovery of India by herself as well as by the world. The consequence was that Young India was confronted by a bunch of problems that demanded solution, before India could justify herself and her heritage at the bar of history and take her place in the world as the home of universal religion, the haven of fearless inquiry into the ultimate and the hermitage of high morality.

"Am I my brother's keeper?" queried the new-born Indian individualist. "Can we conceive of religion at any time standing the rigorous test of exact science?" doubted

the young man, fresh from the laboratories of Indian colleges. "Can we build across the centuries a span connecting Kalidasa and Calcutta?" asked the impatient patriot. "Has the teachings of the ancient Indian forest-dweller any meaning to the generations whirling in the maelstrom of world polities and economics? Can Vedanta be used as the lever of national regeneration? Is religion only the opium of the masses? Does God exist? Can you and I see Him or It?"—thus came the questions, one after the other. "Is there a fundamental cleavage between the individual's path to God and his duty to society?" asked the aspirant who

was half recluse and half active! "Truth is one; the sages call it by different names," said the Vedic Seer. "Can this vision be made the harbinger of peace between the warring peoples of the world?" asked the lover of world peace and co-operation.

These were the self-same questions that surged in the breasts of the brilliant galaxy of inquirers and spiritual heroes who wended their way along the Ganges towards Dakshineswar. There, supremely kind to them all, sat Sri Ramakrishna, awaiting with answers that removed the thorn of doubt for ever and, in addition, transformed their hearts by a Divine Alchemy. Among those who sought and secured this conviction, it was Swami Vivekananda who saw, even then in general outline the significance of the Master's life. After the passing away of Sri Ramakrishna the Swamiji felt it more and more clearly. While he listened to the painful cries of poverty and ignorance rising from the mud hovels of India and the lusty cheers of luxury from the marble mansions of America, he felt that Sri Ramakrishna had vouchsafed a vision that could, in more senses than one, put bread into the mouths of the hungry and heal the lacerations of distress. That vision, he felt, could create not only a New India and a New World, but the essential guarantee of both, a New Man.

It was thus that Swamiji came to resolve upon an embodiment of the uniqueness of Sri Ramakrishna and build up a system of hearts that will treasure up the precious perfume of his personality. The Ramakrishna Mission was the result. The objects of the Mission were declared, so far as they could be crystallised in cold

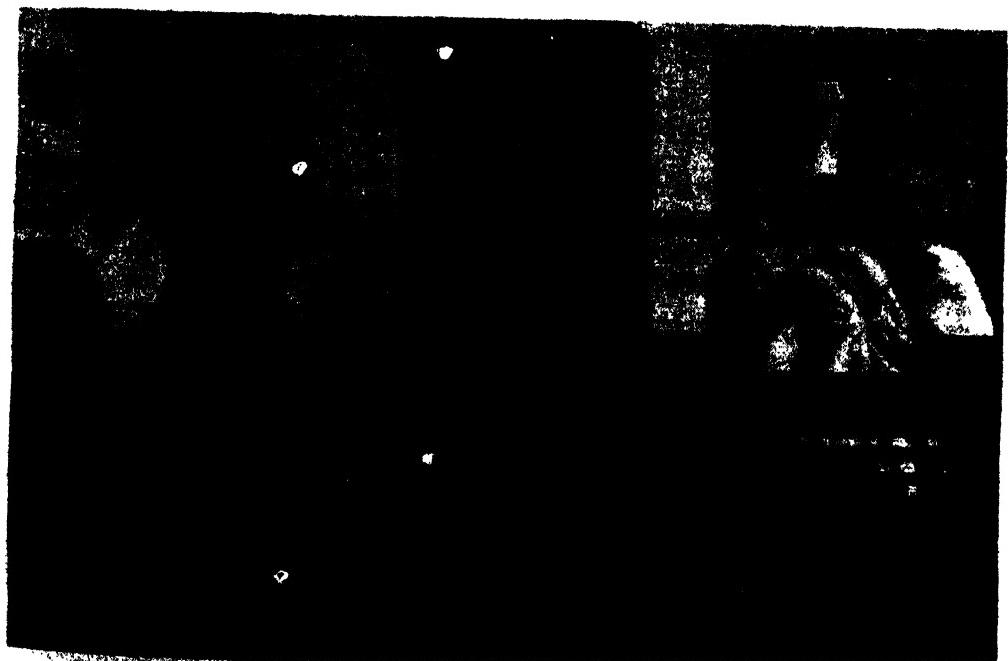
and stereotyped words, to be "the imparting of the teachings of Vedanta as propounded by Sri Ramakrishna, the promotion of the study of Vedanta as well as the arts, sciences and industrial and secular knowledge for the task of helping the masses, and the establishment and maintenance of educational and charitable institutions and homes of service."

Now for the translation of these words into deeds, so far as that imponderable can be expressed in black and white. Let us look into the General Report of the Ramakrishna Mission issued in September, 1934. Let us turn rapidly over the pages of matter-of-fact abstracts, summaries and figures and try to catch something of the vital forces behind every line. Apart from the gigantic relief operations conducted under Sannyasin guidance during the Bihar Earthquake and other but relatively minor calamities, there are some fragments that catch the eye as we hurry along. Indoor Hospitals some of them treating 410 patients; Dispensaries affording free medical relief to thousands; Night Schools in the labourers' colonies; anti-malarial and Kala-azar injections; a workshop of Automobile Engineering; a Sanskrit Pathasala; magic lanterns and sets of slides for demonstration in villages; practical training in meditation; two shoe factories for the untouchables of a place; relief given in cases of small-pox; 6914 home visits done by the Sisu Mangal, Child Welfare Centre, at Calcutta; an asylum with thirty seats for the aged and the disabled; a free tuberculosis centre at Paharganj; season schools for the Khasia Hill aboriginal tribes; lectures in Spanish by the Swamiji in





The Sishumangal Pratisthan
(Child Welfare Centre.)



The Lecture Room



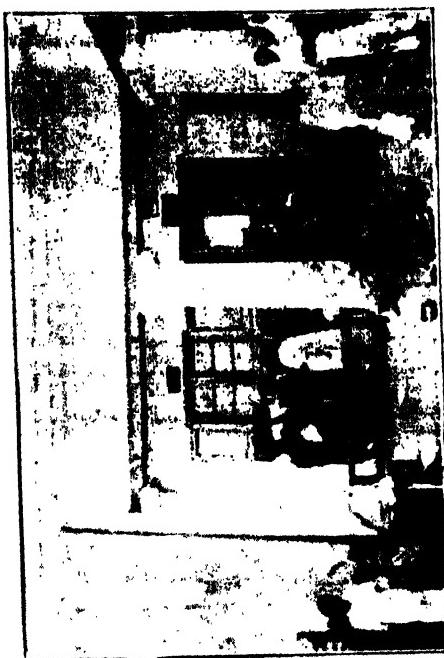
The Resident Staff



A Group of Toddlers



Ramakrishna Math Charitable Dispensary, Madras



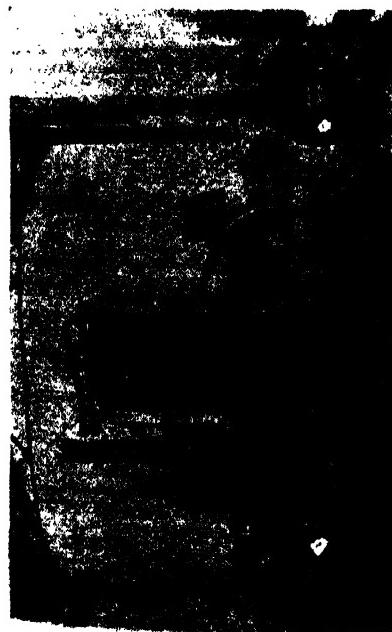
Mechanical Engineering Section, Students' Home, Madras



Weaving Section



Kattan Work



Steam Engine



Carpenter

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Brazil ; lessons in toy-making and leather-handicrafting ; a Seva Samiti Scout Troop started ; a children's library ; a lecture every week at W. P. R. O. Station ; a school with 162 Harijan boys and 200 caste Hindu boys....and so on, right through the ninety-six pages ! What a variety of programmes, plans and activities, fed by the same strengthening grace, inspired by the same ideals ! And yet, who can measure the influence exercised on thousands of people, through contact and conversation, through example more than precept, by the Sannyasins who reside in the various centres ? Who can gauge the spread of tolerance and understanding, the emphasis on the inmost factors of individual and social renovation, the awakening of the moral enthusiasm needed to translate theory into practice ? Suffice it to say, that the Mission is a mighty army of heroes, lay and monastic, marching forward to the call of their commander, "I bequeath to you, Young Men, this sympathy, this struggle for the poor, the ignorant, the oppressed. Vow then to devote your whole lives to these millions going downward and still downward, everyday. You have read, मृद्दो अव विद्युते अव "Let the mother be as God to you, let the father be as God to you ! I say, मृद्दो अव, विद्युते अव, 'The poor, the illiterate, the ignorant and the afflicted, let these be your God.' Know that service to these alone is the highest religion."

Wherefrom did the Swamiji imbibe this positive and practical Vedanta? Listen to Swami Saradanandaaji, his great companion-in-arms. "One day, when Sri Ramakrishna was seated in his room at Dakshineswar, surrounded by Narendranath, Swami Viveka-

nanda) and other disciples, the discussion drifted to the ideal of mercy and its implications. "Show mercy to all creatures"—with these words on his lips, the Master passed into a deep trance. On coming back into semi-consciousness, he took up the thread of discussion. Kindness to creatures ! Fie upon thee, Man ! An insignificant being, thyself, how canst thou show kindness to God's creatures ? Who art thou to show mercy ? Rather, serve all Jivas, all beings, as Shiva, God Himself." Narendranath, of all others, understood the deep significance of the words of the Master and found in them a wonderful illumination." Sri Ramakrishna always drove home through example and advice, the message of Sevadharma. "The spiritual aspirant," he said, "should strive to see and serve the Narayana in every human being, especially the stricken, the downtrodden, the diseased, the ostracised and the ignorant." Thus Sri Ramakrishna laid the foundations for the Daridra Narayana Seva that we find enshrined in a multitude of endeavours throughout the country, the latest being the Harijan Uplift Movement.

And, after all, in spite of pedantic analysis that seeks to explain the origin of the Ramakrishna Mission through modern parallels in other countries, it is not difficult to see that the roots go deeper still. The Buddhist Sangha was a great historical and cultural inspiration for the New Monasticism. That the heart of the Buddha and the intellect of Sankara form the highest peaks of human possibility was the conviction of the Swamiji. The Buddha said, "As the mother protects her only son at the sacrifice of her life, let the

monk cultivate an infinitely kind mind towards all. Standing, walking, sitting or lying down, so far as he is awake, let him abide in this mental mood. They call this state the state of Divine Life in this world." And, monks building their faith on benevolence, tended the sick, wiped away the orphan's tear, succoured the victims of flood and pestilence, everywhere in Asia from Ceylon to Korea, on the banks of the Ganges as well as of the Yangtsekiang. The Buddha too was but re-interpreting for his age, the teachings of the Upanishads re-lived and commented upon by Sri Ramakrishna for this age. The Upanishadic seer described the Lord as

ते ची ते पुमानसि ते कुमार उत या कुमारी ।
ते जीर्णे दण्डेन वंचसि त्वं जातो भवसि विष्वतोमुखः
"Thou art woman, thou art man, thou art youth, thou art maiden, thou, as an old man, totterest along on thy staff, thou art born everywhere."

Who can deny that in the realisation of this Truth, for oneself, lies the consummation of the career of Man? The Ramakrishna Mission (so far as a lay servant treading in its outer corridors, eager to share and benefit, can understand it) is dedicated to serve man in the realisation of his Destiny. Every seeker is given sanctuary and persuaded to battle with himself and proceed a few further steps towards the goal. Invariably, the battle is itself the victory.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA MOVEMENT AT HOME—II

By N. Subramanya Aiyar, B.A., I.T.

[In the following article by Mr. N. Subramanya Aiyar, the Head Master of Sri Ramakrishna Residential High School and a close friend and worker of the Mission, the reader will get in a brief compass some idea of the nature and extent of the work done by the Math and the Mission.]

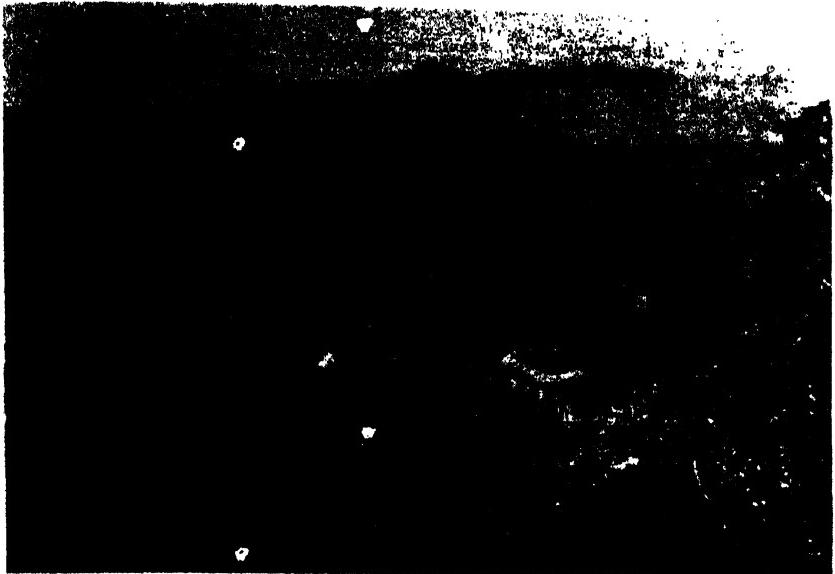
INTRODUCTION.

THE twin institutions known as the Ramakrishna Math and the Ramakrishna Mission have a history dating from the time when the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna gathered round the sick-bed of their great Master to nurse him in his last illness. Their ideals and objects embodied in the motto "Siva and Seva" may be briefly elucidated as follows:—

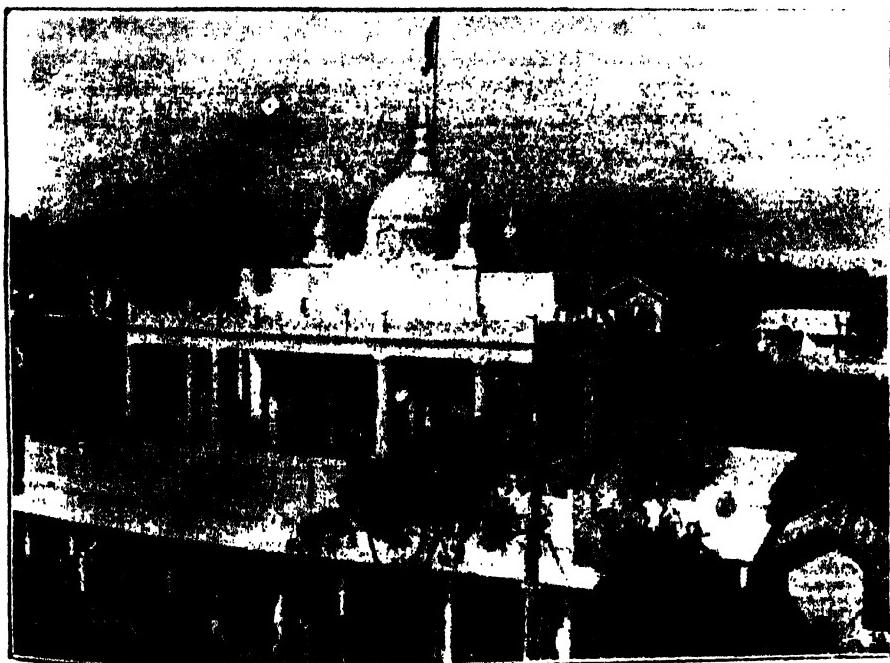
(a) To bring into existence a band of Sannyasins devoted to leading a life of renunciation and practical spirituality, from among whom teachers and workers could be sent out to spread Vedantic and religious ideas as illustrated in the life of Sri Ramakrishna.

(b) In conjunction with the lay disciples and sympathisers to carry on missionary, philanthropic and educational work, looking upon all men, women and children irrespective of caste, creed or colour as veritable manifestations of the Divine.

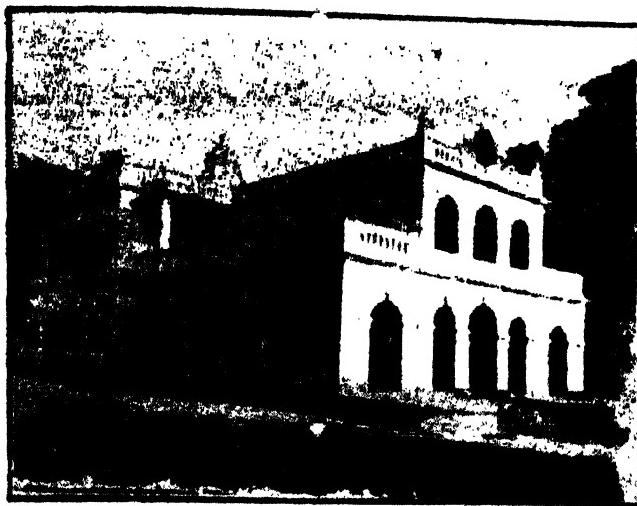
From very small beginnings the Math and the Mission have now become institutions of all-India importance, and their activities, as will be seen from the articles appearing elsewhere in this issue, now extend to several countries outside India. One can form an idea of their present position from the fact that the General Report of the Math and the Mission for 1933 gives descriptions of 77 main Indian institutions, several



Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati



Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Bombay



Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras



Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Madras



Prayer Hall, Students' Home, Madras

of them having many branches and departments of activity, and 17 foreign centres of work. An estimate of the work can also be made by considering the accounts for 1933 which give the total receipts of the several Mission centres in India (as apart from the Math centres) as amounting to Rs.6,33,425-15-4 and the Permanent Funds of the same to Rs. 13,56,829-8-0.

It is not possible to give here a comprehensive account of all these centres of work. We shall confine ourselves to brief descriptions of a few centres that are specially important and typical of the activities of the Math and the Mission. The descriptions are given under four main heads: (1) Maths or purely monastic institutions, (2) Educational institutions, (3) Philanthropic institutions, (4) Temporary Relief Works.

MATHS

The Math at Belur and its branch Maths serve both as retreats and as training ground for Sannyasins and Brahmacarins of the Order. The members are constantly moved from one centre to another according to the exigencies of the work, under the control and direction of the Governing body at Belur, Calcutta. The funds of the Maths consist of subscriptions and donations from friends and devotees, ear-marked for worship and maintenance of the Sadhus. In some Mat's this fund is strengthened by the proceeds of the publication department.

Belur Math : The first and the foremost of the Maths is the one at Belur, situated on the western bank of the Ganges five miles north of Calcutta, in full view of Dakshineswar, and this is the heart of the whole Order. Here rest the relics of Sri

Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, and the atmosphere is filled with a thousand sacred memories relating to the lives of Sri Ramakrishna's direct disciples, many of whom had lived for years in this head monastery. The Math has become a place of pilgrimage to thousands of Sri Ramakrishna's devotees hailing from different parts of India. On the Master's birthday the Math attracts more than a lakh of people, and over twenty thousand people of all sections of society take their mid-day meal there on that day. On the occasion of the Durga Pooja also several thousands of people congregate at the Math for worship. Besides imparting spiritual training to the monks, the Math maintains a library and a seminary for the instruction of the inmates in Sanskrit literature and philosophy. As the headquarters of the Math and the Mission, it controls and supervises all the branch centres and their activities. All the relief operations of the mission are carried on under its auspices. Locally it runs a Charitable Dispensary and an Industrial School with a free hostel attached to it.

Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati : Started by Swami Vivekananda himself in 1899, it is dedicated to the practice and preaching of Advaita free from any compromise. The Ashrama is situated 6800 feet above the sea level, and nestles amidst the snow-capped peaks of the Himalayas, far away from other human habitations. Besides serving as an ideal place for contemplation and study, it has grown to be the most important publication centre of the Order. The Ashram conducts the well-known English Monthly, "Prabuddha Bharata", and has published several important books in English, some of them being the Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda in seven volumes, Lives of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda separately, M. Ronsin Rolland's two volumes on Ramakrishna-Vivekananda, and the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad with Sankara's commentary on it translated into English. The Ashram maintains a free dispensary in the hills.

Madras Math : This Math with its multifarious works, spiritual, missionary, literary and philanthropic is one of the important centres of the Order. Started on a very modest scale in 1897 by the late

Swami Ramakrishnananda, the activities of this Math have been either directly or indirectly responsible for the starting of several centres not only in South India but also in Ceylon, Burma and F.M.S. Besides undertaking preaching work in Madras and other parts of the Presidency, the Math conducts two magazines, the "Vedanta Kesari" in English and the "Ramakrishna Vijayam" in Tamil and publishes several books in English and in the South Indian languages. Among the important publications may be mentioned the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna and the Upanishad Series in English, and a detailed life of Sri Ramakrishna and translation of Swami Vivekananda's works in Tamil and in Telugu. A Charitable Dispensary with a very large attendance, and work in some slums of the city form the other important public activities of the Math. It need not be added that worship and training of monks occupy a prominent place among the various items of the Math activities.

Other Maths and Study Centres: We can but make brief references here to a few other important Maths run on the same general lines but still having their own individuality and special field of work. In western India there is the Ashram at Bombay whose influence is felt all over the Presidency and has been indirectly responsible for the starting of centres at Rajkot and Karachi. Besides several other centres, Calcutta has the Bagh Bazar Math in the northern part of the city, which is sacred to the memories of the Holy Mother and Swami Saradananda both of whom lived and entered into Mahasamadhi in this place. It conducts the Bengali Monthly "Udbodhan" and is the most important centre for publishing Ramakrishna-Vivekananda literature in Bengali.

The Bonares Advaita Ashrama where monks retire for a contemplative life, the Math at Dacca with its multifarious preaching and philanthropic activities, and the more recently started Ashrams at Nagpur and Delhi help to disseminate the ideas of the movement in different Provinces of this country. Although strictly speaking it has to be grouped along with foreign activities, we may also mention here the valuable work done by the Ramakrishna Mission Ashram and the educational institutions of

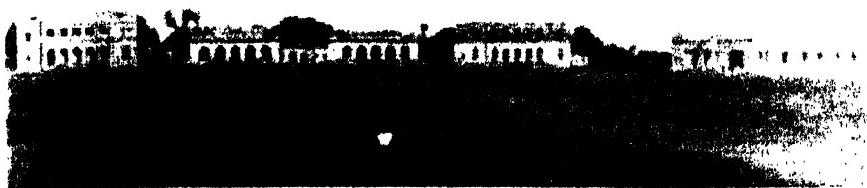
the Mission in Colombo and other parts of the island, and to the preaching activities of the Ashram in Singapore.

Another type of Ashramas, besides doing the usual preaching and philanthropic work, has grown in importance as study centres for monks. Among such institutions may be mentioned the Gadadhar Ashram in South Calcutta devoted to Sanskrit learning and Vedic culture, the monastery at Bhuvaneswar (Puri), a peace resort noted for the conveniences it affords for meditation and scriptural study, and the Ashram at Mysore which through the kind patronage of His Highness the Maharaja has organized a study circle affording facilities to the monks for the study of eastern and western philosophy, psychology, sociology and comparative religion.

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

The main object of the educational activities of the Mission is to supplement college and school education with proper home-training and to create a few model institutions in different fields of educational work. Character building, moral and religious instruction, physical culture, vocational training and insistence on dignity of labour form the essential feature of the education imparted in all these institutions. These educational institutions are of various types—Homes for grown up students, Residential Schools for boys and girls and Rural Education Centres. The common ideal of all these is 'Man-making,' the educational creed placed before the Mission by Swami Vivekananda.

Madras Students' Home:—The Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home which has gained a great reputation in this Presidency is perhaps the most important educational venture undertaken by the Mission. From very small beginnings it has grown into a self-contained educational colony catering to the physical, intellectual and spiritual needs of about 170 human personalities in the making, ranging from boys in their early teens to young men



Ramakrishna Mission Vidya Pathi, Durgapur



Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Calcutta

**Ramakrishna Mission Siksha Mandir, Sarisha, Diamond Harbour,
24 Perganas, Bengal**



Girls playing Volley Ball



Girls at Dumb bell drill

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about to enter life. It has boarding arrangements for college students, a Residential High School for boys and a Residential Industrial School providing instruction in Automobile Engineering for students who want to take to technical lines. It adheres to the old Gurukula ideal in so far as it combines secular education with spiritual training, insists on the students' living in close contact with the teachers and gives free boarding and lodging to all its inmates except a few coming from rich families. Among other important features of the training imparted here it may be mentioned that the students learn various handicrafts and do all the household duties except cooking. The magnitude of the work turned out here can be estimated from the fact that the whole institution is run at an annual expenditure of Rs. 40,000. The Home with its palatial buildings, its impressive neatness and orderliness and its general atmosphere of intellectual and spiritual upliftment is a source of attraction to all educationists who visit the city of Madras.

Calcutta Students' Home :—This rapidly growing institution, though smaller in magnitude and scope of work than the one described before, is noted for the intensity of its system of training and the remarkable success with which it inculcates the ideals of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda movement into its inmates. Situated on an extensive ground of 20 acres some six miles away from Calcutta at Gauripur, Dum Dum, the Home is a college Students' Hostel recognised by the Calcutta University, providing lodging, boarding and home training to deserving students without any payment or at concession rates. The students live in close contact with the resident Sannyasins under whose direct supervision the institution is run. In its scheme of character building and spiritual training the institution relies more on loving personal contact and sympathetic treatment than on formal instruction. A section for training students in agriculture and cottage industries is fast growing. The Home may well feel proud of the fact that it has contributed many able workers to the cause of Sri Ramakrishna, two of them being at present teachers of Vedanta in America and England.

Deoghar Vidya Pith :—This is a Residential High School for young boys, numbering more than 100 at present, conducted on the lines of the Gurukula system. While the assimilation of academic knowledge is not precluded, it lays the main stress on the development of character and religious spirit through a combined process of self-restraint and self-development. Surrounded by picturesque natural scenery and away from the bustle of town, it is situated in a place which is both a health resort and a centre of pilgrimage. The boys are taught and looked after by a staff consisting mainly of monks and a few self-sacrificing young men. It is mainly an institution for paying boys, and a good standard is maintained in diet, games, discipline and other matters essential to a high class Residential School.

In these days when efforts are being made to start a Public School in India, these institutions at Madras, Calcutta and Deoghar may very well serve as models of what true Indian Public Schools ought to be.

Sister Nivedita Girls' School, Calcutta :—

This is a free Girls' Educational institution with a total strength of 300 girls. Attached to it is a hostel with 50 inmates. While the School imparts modern education up to the High School standard, it lays special emphasis on the study of Sanskrit, religion, household duties and fine arts like needle work and music. The education it imparts is primarily meant to suit the needs of Hindu homes.

The last two institutions described above are unconnected with the Government Educational Department, although there is an arrangement to send up their students for public examinations through other educational institutions. They are therefore free to follow their own courses of study, and hence the education imparted in these may truly be described as national.

Sarisha Centres : This institution on the Diamond Harbour Road situated to the south of Calcutta devotes itself to the task of village reconstruction through an all-round education of the right type. It runs 5 day schools for boys and girls, and one Students' Home. Special efforts are made to impart physical education both to boys and girls, and under the supervision

of an expert teacher, those youths under training maintain a high standard of skill in drill and sports. The extent of the work that is done can be estimated from the fact that it has to incur an expenditure of Rs. 10,000 per year in its work in rural areas.

Ramakrishna Ashram, Trichur :—The educational work of this rural centre is directed chiefly to the upliftment of the depressed classes or Harijans. It runs a day school with about 300 pupils of whom more than half are Harijans, and a Gurukula or Students' Home having about 30 inmates, three-fourths of whom are Harijans. While religious instruction and secular education up to the Secondary School standard are imparted and students are taught three languages, Sanskrit, Hindi and Malayalam, special care is taken to develop the aptitude for manual work found in boys of the depressed classes. The aim of the management is to make the institution for these poor people what the Tuskegee Institute is doing for the Negroes of America. The influence of the Ashram is felt in other branches of rural life also.

The Ashram at Shella :—There are some other Ashrams which carry on educational work in the name of Ramakrishna and on the same principles as the Mission institutions, but which have not yet been formally affiliated. Prominent among them is the Ashram at Shella in Assam which has been started by a member of the Order and is doing excellent work among the Khasia hill tribes who are being rapidly converted to other religions. The Ashram conducts one High School, two Secondary Schools, three Students' Homes and a Dispensary. It has its headquarters in Shillong and has recently started publication of religious literature in Khasi language.

These are only a few typical educational institutions of the Mission. Quite a large number of them, too numerous to mention here, are scattered over different provinces of India and Ceylon. According to 1926 Convention Report there were altogether nearly 4,000 boys and girls in the Mission Schools and 200 inmates in the Mission Homes. In the course of a decade these numbers have vastly increased.

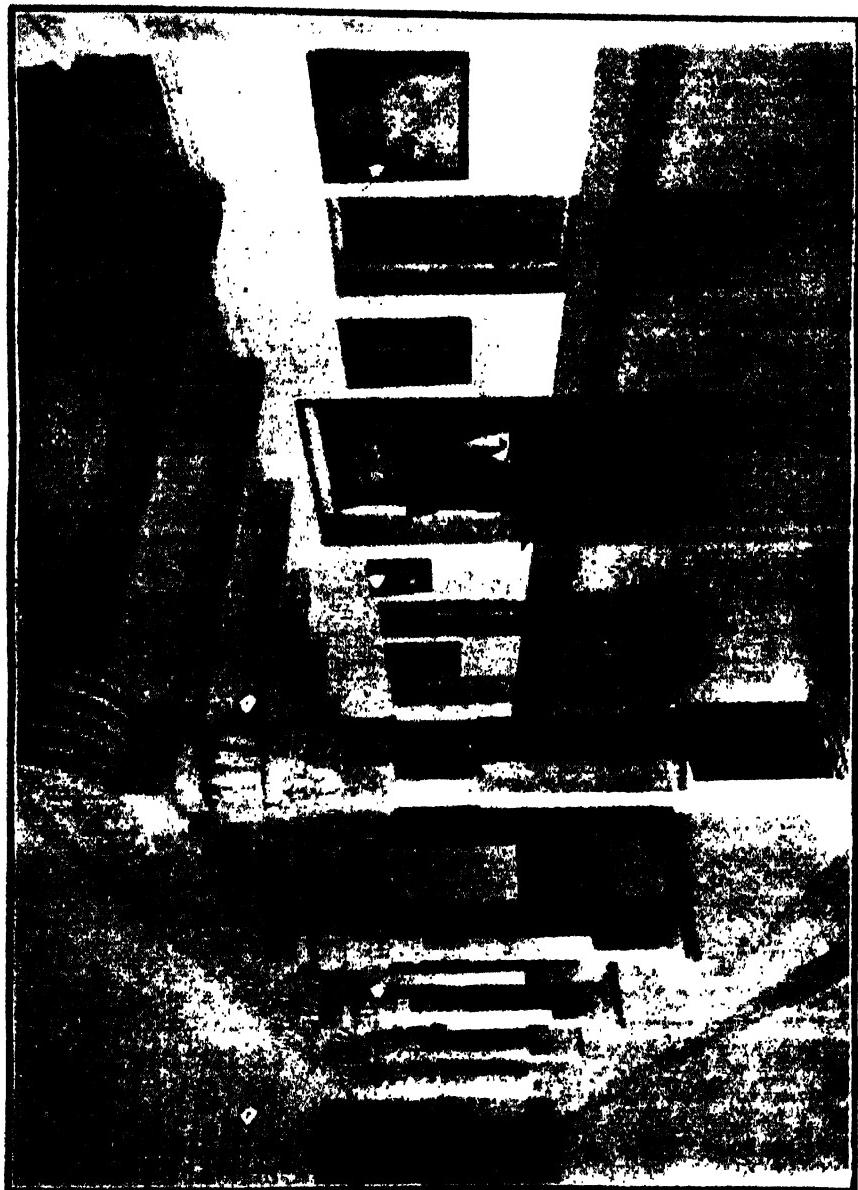
GENERAL PHILANTHROPIC ACTIVITIES

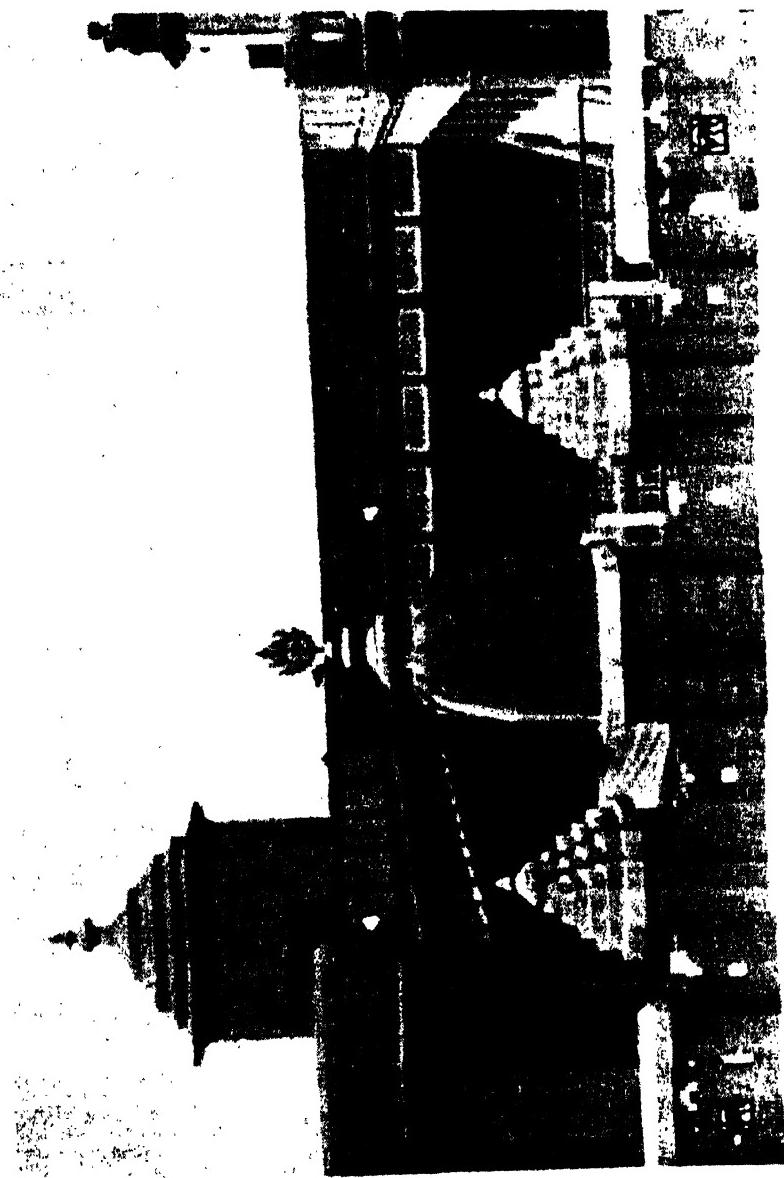
Philanthropic work done in a spirit of disinterested service leads to spiritual advancement through self-purification ; by serving man as veritable manifestation of God one can grow spiritually and at the same time contribute to the general well-being of humanity. Thus the philanthropic activities of the Ramakrishna Mission are undertaken as a part of spiritual discipline, providing as they do a means of self-purification through disinterested and loving service of the needy and poor. In the following paragraphs we shall give brief descriptions of a few typical institutions sprung from this ideal of service as worship and spiritual discipline.

Banaras Sevashram :—The largest of such institutions is the Sevashram at Benares. Started in 1900, it has now several extensions in different parts of the city, run at an annual expenditure of more than Rs. 50,000. These comprise an in-patient department with 145 beds ; a refuge for men invalids with 25 beds ; a refuge for women invalids with eight beds ; a Girls' Home with eight inmates managed by a lady superintendent ; a Home for about 20 paralytic patients ; a Dharmashala for strangers ; an out-door dispensary ; and a section for special and occasional relief work. The workers in the hospital are all monks, the female sections being managed by lady workers.

Other Similar Institutions :—There are similar equally big institutions at Brindavan, Hardwar, and Rangoon. The work of the last one especially is very extensive, its expenditure being more than Rs. 40,000 per year. Smaller institutions are too numerous to mention.

To show the extent of work it is enough to state that according to the Convention Report of 1926 the total number of inpatients treated in all the institutions was 3,385, and that of out-patients 4,14,378. The extent of service rendered has considerably increased during the intervening decade. Both in-patients and out-patients are treated free of all charges and no dis-

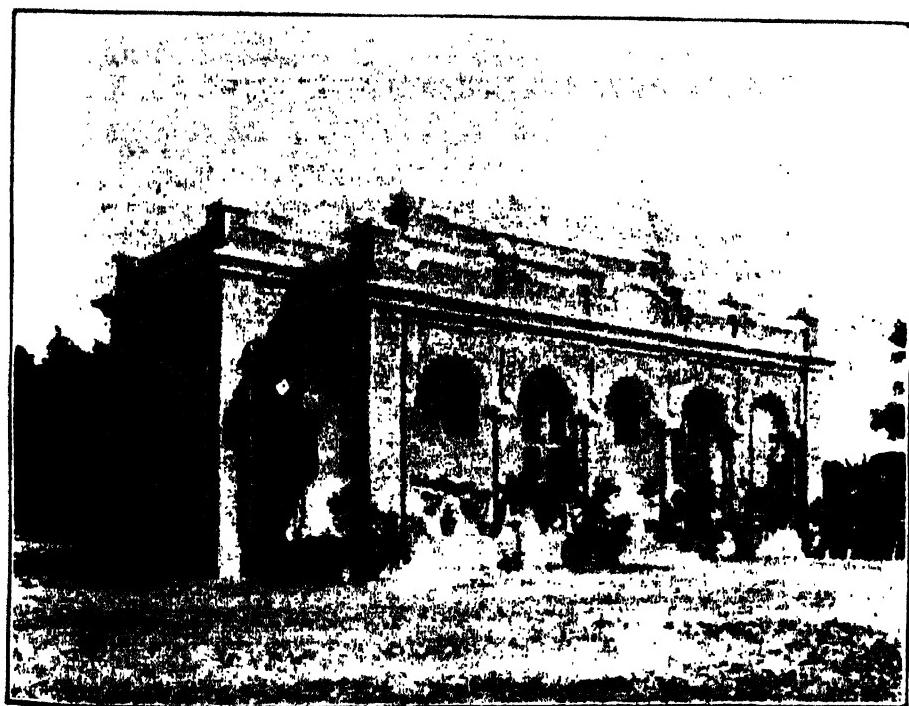




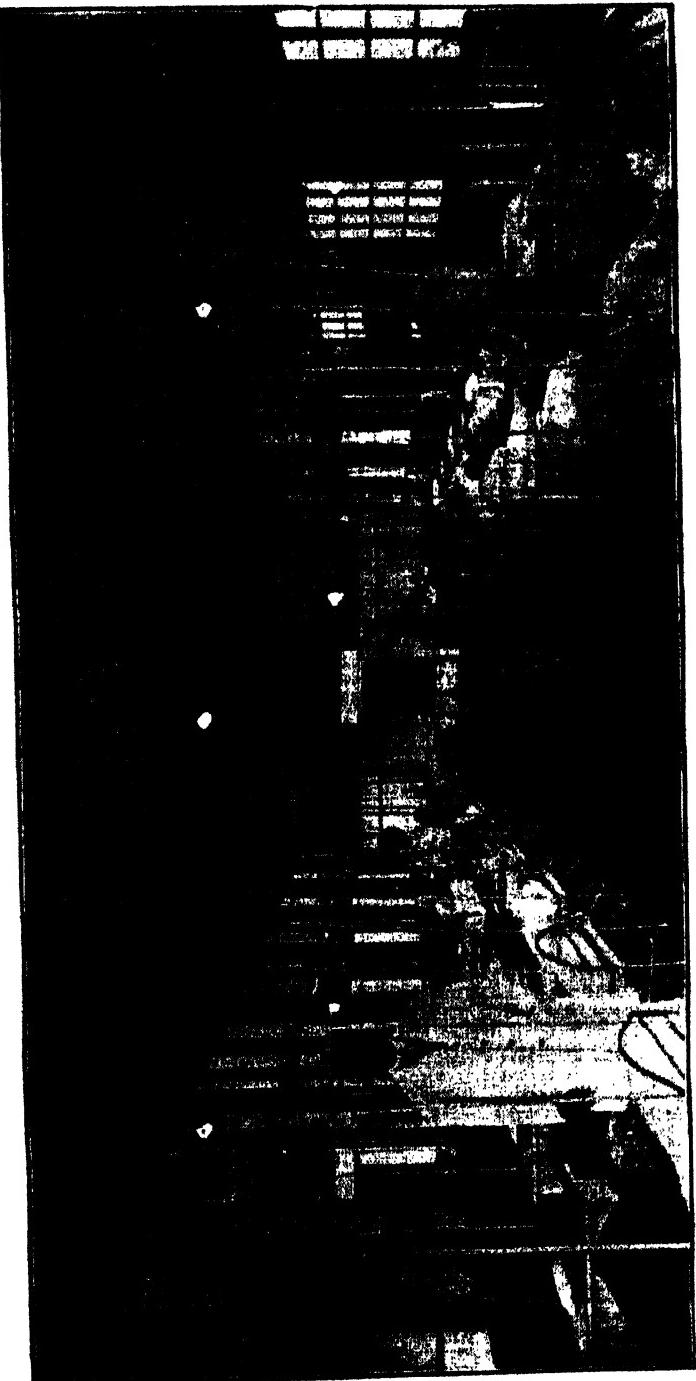
W.M. BLAKE'S DRAWING OF THE TIBETAN SHRINE



Ramakrishna Mission Sevashram, Benares



Surgical ward of the Sevashram, Benares



A ward, Kamaleshwara Mission Sevashram, Raigarh

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tion of caste, colour or creed is shown in the service rendered in these institutions.

Sisumangal Pratishthan :—Special mention has to be made of this Child Welfare Centre at Calcutta started in 1922. Competent medical authorities have pronounced it to be perfect in miniature both from the point of view of equipment and quality of service. Its work consists in giving regular hygienic instruction and efficient pre-natal care to expectant mothers through Sunday Clinics, providing skilled aid during confinement either in the houses of the patients or in the hospital of the Pratishthan, taking systematic care of new-born babies up to the school-going age through home visits and bi-weekly clinics and training women of good families in midwifery, obstetrical nursing and infant care. In many respects it is a pioneer institution in India and a model for others to copy. The Calcutta Corporation has shown its appreciation of its work by giving it an annual grant of Rs. 8,000 which is supplemented by an annual contribution of an American friend to the extent of Rs. 6,000 and other contributions locally received.

TEMPORARY RELIEF WORKS

The humanitarian activities of the Mission are not confined to these and other institutions of a permanent nature. The field is vast and the service takes many forms—feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and nursing poor patients in their own houses ; picking up old and diseased persons from roadside and arranging for their accommodation and treatment ; undertaking the cremation of the dead ; providing for the comforts of pilgrims during big concourses at fairs and festivals ; the organising of relief during epidemics, flood, famine, fire, plague and earthquake, etc. All these and other aspects of service receive the earnest attention of the members of the Ramakrishna Mission. They have been seen during the past thirty years and more in every part of India in times of need, carrying relief to hundreds of thousands of dis-

tressed people irrespective of caste, colour or creed, distributing food, grains and clothing, helping in the erection of huts and sometimes rebuilding whole villages, without any ulterior motive of proselytisation in all these activities. Recently work of this nature on a large scale was carried on in the province of Bihar. Care is taken in every case to see that while help is rendered to enable those who are struck down to stand on their own feet, it is given in such a manner as not to impair their sense of self-respect.

According to the report of the convention of 1926 the number of persons served from 1899-1924 in temporary relief operations is 1,92,119. Besides this, for the same period there are records of relief operations undertaken on 24 occasions in different parts of India of which detailed figures are not available.

CONCLUSION

The activities of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission are to be valued more for the spirit behind them than for the work turned out, however extensive it might be. The modern age is noted for its shift of emphasis from individualism to collectivism, from egoism to altruism, from personal salvation to social re-construction. Religion as coming to us through Medieval times undoubtedly places the emphasis on the ideal of personal salvation, and the essential religious problem of to-day therefore is how to reconcile the conservation of individual spiritual values with that of social values. The work of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission as a practical application of the doctrine of "Siva and Seva" to modern life, is the solution offered to this spiritual problem

of today by the two great Indians, Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. It provides an outstanding example to the world at large, and to

India in particular, of the right method of striving for individual salvation without prejudice to the ideal of 'good life' understood in the social sense.

THE RAMAKRISHNA MOVEMENT ABROAD—I

By Dhan Gopal Mukherjee

[Mr. Mukherjee is one of the very few successful Indian writers and lecturers in America. Especially one of his books, "The Face of Silence," is of great artistic value, and Mr. Romain Rolland acknowledges that it was the first book that made him acquainted with, and interested in, the life of Sri Ramakrishna. The world therefore owes not a little to Mr. Mukherjee for M. Rolland's valuable works on Ramakrishna-Vivekananda. Mr. Mukherjee is also a close friend of the Vedanta movement in America. His strong faith in Sri Ramakrishna and his fervent enthusiasm for his cause are amply evident from the following writing of his.]

RAMAKRISHNA was born in 1836. Within a hundred years of his birth the missions that disseminate his teachings have assumed importance. There is one in Spanish-speaking Argentina ; there has been one in Dutch-English South Africa ; and there is one Swami preaching Ramakrishna's message in the European continent. The number of missionaries to the English-speaking world is large. In the United States there are ten centres run by nine Sadhus. So far there has been only one centre in England, led by a Swami.

It can be asserted with pride that almost all of our Sadhus are invited by the natives of the country ; nowhere do they take up their ministry uninvited. Their meagre allowances are from their foreign students. That they live a Sadhu's life is conceded by all. Far away from their homes, away from traditions of the past of our land, they wander pure monks holding on to the ideal of Sri Ramakrishna.

Along with these monks there are lay followers serving the cause. Some of them are examples of their kind. Born and brought up as Americans, Englishmen or Germans, they are as devoted as householders of the same spiritual excellence in India. What a far cry ! Is it not a far cry ? Where is Kamarpukur and where is New York or Buenos Aires !

Tremble, ye scoffing Indians, before this triumph of divinity over humanity. In your entire history since those days of Asoka you have never witnessed such spiritual tribute rendered to your racial genius by foreigners. Arise, awake, open your eyes and behold the sun of Kamarpukur flooding the world with the glory of Truth.

Next we come to the innumerable men and women who acknowledge that the influence of Sri Ramakrishna has made life worth living for them. These owe it all to the books by Swami Vivekananda read directly in English or in translations. In my wanderings over a quarter of a century all over the globe I have witnessed the phenomenal increase in

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the number of people who have discovered truth for themselves by reading the works of Sri Ramakrishna's eldest spiritual son. They look upon the Guru of gurus as Perfect Man. Perfect Man, or incarnation of God, he has showered glory on India and all humanity. Each came to honour, not to humble. Each man or woman sees the truth that "Man is divine" and should live to manifest that divinity.

The books of Vivekananda have not gone out of print all these forty years. Newer editions and other translations are being printed. Compare this fact with the works of other Indians who have written on religion the past hundred years, and you will see that the teachings of the Sannyasin belong to the ages. Probably forty centuries will be devoted to honouring his words.

Who have acknowledged their influence to Swamiji? To date I am aware of the names of scientists, artists, philosophers, mothers, fathers, daughters and sons of various nationalities who have learned to do homage to Sri Ramakrishna by reading Vivekananda. Since they were Hindus and Indians, the tribute has been paid to India. The next hundred years will see its volume grow hundredfold. Fortunate are we who have witnessed the dawn before the rest of the world!

It is a matter of speculation if within a hundred years of his ascension the Buddha was preached to alien races in far off lands. We know

Jesus was proclaimed to non-Hebrew races within fifty years of his ascension. Ramakrishna was made known to the world by 1894—within ten years of his death. Those who will come ten hundred years from now will be able to measure the magnitude of his life. He belongs to the world. This Viswa Manav, World-man, lived and died within a radius of a few hundred kilometers of his birthplace. Now his shadow has crossed the entire earth. "Vedaham etam Purusham mahantam"—yes, we know Him, this mightiest of Persons. He is Universal as the Sun. We who have been fortunate enough to know a little of his glory will be traitors to posterity, if we fail to set down what we have seen and heard. Indians and non-Indians are renouncing what men hold dear in order to join the Ramakrishna Mission. American, English, Scandinavian, Dutch, Chekolovak and others are some of our monks. This has not happened since the Buddhistic period of Indian history.

On what does this structure rest? On a life whose four pillars are Kamarpukur, Jairambati, Dakshineswar and Belur. Men will come there for hundreds of years from Europe, Africa, America, and Asia to do obeisance to divinity. Now they come in their hundreds; later they shall come in thousands. The Ramakrishna Missions to-day at home or abroad are but faint indications of the vivid and vast drama of to-morrow.

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By Swami Devatmananda

[Swami Devatmananda is the leader of the Vedanta Centre of Portland. Before his departure to America he had done much valuable work in several of the educational institutions of the Mission in India. In America he has experience of several other Vedanta Centres besides his own, and his writing, therefore, giving some details of the work in America and an outline of what is taking place in other foreign countries will be found very interesting and instructive.

Besides the works of a permanent nature started in the countries mentioned here, Swamis have done temporary preaching in other parts of the world like France, Italy, South Africa, Canada, Malay States, etc. It has also to be mentioned that there is a permanent centre in Singapore, and an Ashrama and several educational institutions in Ceylon.]

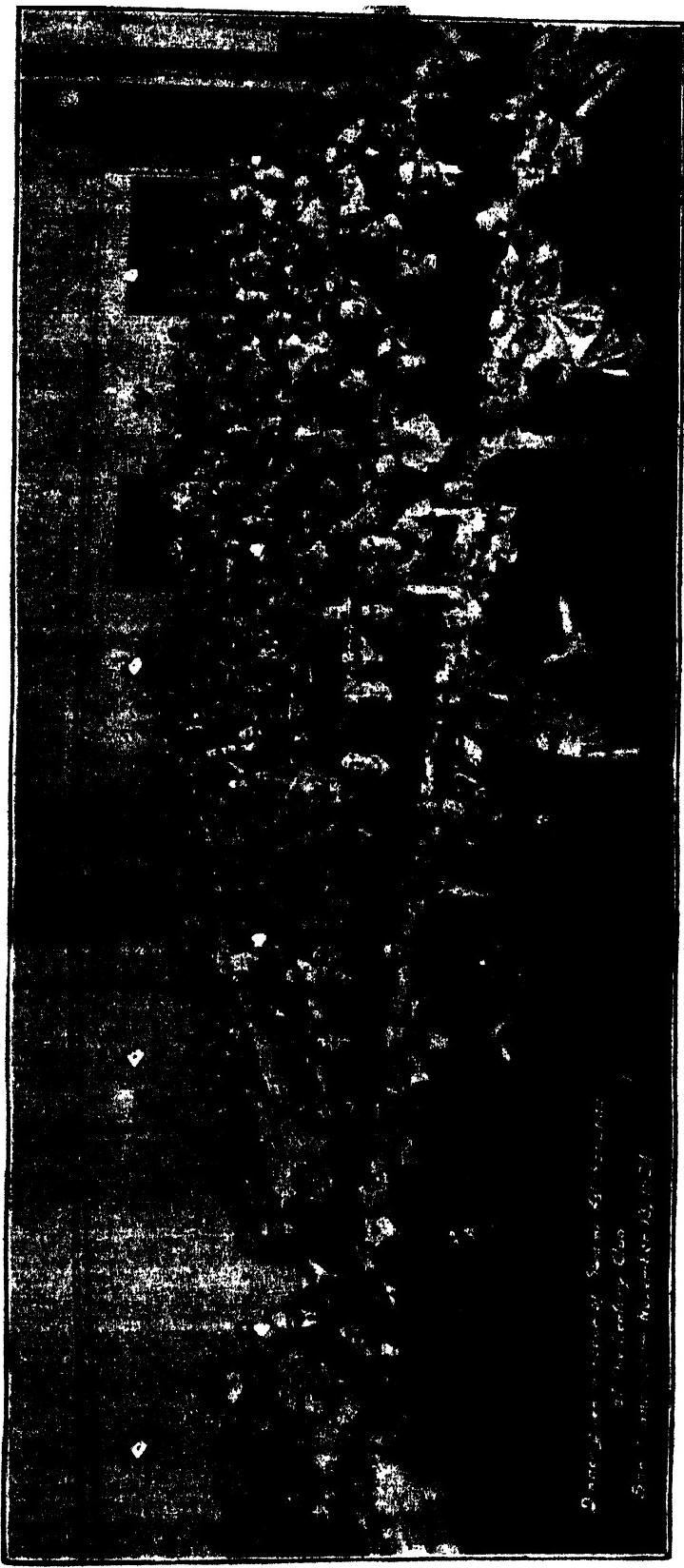
SINCE the days when the adventurous Buddhist monks went to distant parts of the world to spread the Gospel of the Exalted One, Indian religious leaders and missionaries have not been known to have gone to foreign countries to preach the spiritual truths discovered by our sages and saints. This discontinuity in Indian missionary tradition was broken when Swami Vivekananda presented the message of Hinduism before the Parliament of Religions held in connection with the historic Chicago Fair of 1893. Since the Swami's successful preaching in America and Europe, the Vedanta movement inaugurated by him has been kept alive, especially in the U.S.A., by the successive line of Swamis of the Ramakrishna Order who have visited the American shores. In recent times the movement has been spreading to other Western countries as well. The following is a brief account of the Vedanta movement in its present state of development in (1) U.S.A., (2) South America, and (3) Europe.

IN U. S. A.

As the place of Swami Vivekananda's brilliant triumph and active preaching, the United States of

America has been more responsive than any other country to Vedantic ideas. Since Swami Vivekananda's time, in all nineteen Swamis of the Ramakrishna Order have worked in the U.S.A. Of them eight have returned home after several years of preaching and two have passed away in America in the service of their adopted motherland. Special mention has to be made here of Swami Abhedananda, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna who was mainly responsible for stabilising the movement and laying the foundation of its further development after Swami Vivekananda's return from the West. For a period of 26 years, from 1896 to 1922, the year of his final retirement to India, the Swami worked tirelessly for the cause of Vedanta in the West. Besides spreading Indian spiritual ideals among people in the West, the Swami's labours have found expression in a series of valuable books on Vedanta, which are noted for their scholarship and lucidity of exposition.

At present there are nine Swamis managing ten permanent centres of work in various important cities of the United States. A brief description of these centres and the Swamis



Dinner given in honour of Swami Ashokananda at the Century Club,
San Francisco—November 13, 1954.

Swami Ashokananda
Guest of Honor
The Century Club
San Francisco, November 13, 1954





The Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center of New York



S. C. B. Pintaramada



D. C. B. Abbedonada



Swamis in U. S. A.

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in charge of them will give the reader some idea of the nature and extent of the work in the U.S.A.

Vedanta Society, New York. Leader—Swami Bodhananda: Established by Swami Vivekananda himself in 1894, the Society was the field of the labours of Swamis Abhedananda and Nirmalananda, before its present leader assumed charge of it in 1907. Housed in a spacious building purchased during the leadership of Swami Bodhananda, the Society has a beautifully decorated auditorium, a chapel for silent meditation and a good library of Eastern and Western philosophical literature. A morning Service on Sundays, a study class on the Bhagavad Gita on Tuesdays, practical lessons in meditation to students followed by the study of Yoga Aphorisms on Thursdays, and occasional social functions form the important activities of the Society. Many churches, and cultural and educational institutions invite the Swami for lectures on the universal philosophy of Vedanta.

Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre, New York. Founder and Leader—Swami Nikhilananda: This Centre was founded in 1933 by the Swami, who is a gifted speaker and has distinguished himself as a writer and as a translator of Vedantic texts while in India. He conducts a public Service on Sundays, and on week days he holds two classes on standard Vedantic texts, attended by an average of fifty students. He has also opened a class on the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna in order to give the more deeply interested among his students a fuller and more intimate knowledge of the religious traditions and practices of India than is possible in formal lectures and classes. He also lectures very often on invitation at University Clu's and literary and cultural associations.

The Vedanta Society, San Francisco. Leader—Swami Ashokananda: Founded by the saintly Swami Turiyananda, a co-disciple of Swami Vivekananda, in 1900, the Society had the leadership of a succession of brilliant Swamis. Special mention has to be made of Swami Trigunatita, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, who consolidated the Society and established the first Hindu Temple in the West, in which the Society is at present housed; and of

Swami Prakashananda, his successor, who worked in America for a period of 20 years. Both the Swamis passed away in America.

While in India, Swami Ashokananda, the present leader of the Society, had rendered distinguished service to the cause of Sri Ramakrishna in the literary field. Since he took charge of the work in 1932, there had been such a steady increase of attendance at all his discourses that the spacious auditorium of the Temple could not hold the crowd. Consequently, a large hall has been rented at the Century Club for the Sunday morning Services, when the hall is always full to capacity. A public lecture on Vedanta philosophy on Wednesdays, a study class on Fridays, and extension work in Oakland consisting of Sunday Services in the evening and study classes on Mondays—form the other activities of the Swami. During the warm season he holds also a Retreat at the Shanti Ashrama, when groups of students enjoy a marvellous period of solitude, study and meditation, away from their active life.

Vedanta Centre, Boston and Amanda Ashrama, La Crescenta Founder and Leader—Swami Paramananda: Swami Paramananda has been working actively in America for the past 30 years. He is the author of several works, both prose and poetical, which are noted for their simplicity of style and elevating influence and have been a source of inspiration to many spiritual aspirants.

Of the two centres situated on the two coasts of American Continent, the one at Boston on the Atlantic is housed in a magnificent four-storied house with a large and attractive auditorium and a chapel used for silent meditation and worship by resident members and students. Two Services on Sundays, a class on Hindu philosophical works on Tuesdays and a Hindu dinner served to the students and guests on Thursdays comprise the weekly programme of the Centre. At Cohasset, 20 miles from Boston, the Centre owns a beautiful Ashrama or "Retreat" where students can live in peaceful seclusion for several days with the special permission of the authorities. For the past 20 years the Centre has been conducting the well-known Vedanta monthly magazine entitled, "The Message of the East."

The Ananda Ashrama of La Crescenta, California on the Pacific Coast, founded in 1923 is a pioneer attempt in America to build up the spiritual life of its members in the peaceful seclusion of the woods. It is situated in an area of over 150 acres of land on magnificent wooded hills. The students live here as resident members leading a life of simplicity, contemplation and communion. Besides Sunday Services and weekly classes, the Ashrama has an art department, a large apiary and arrangements for incense making and weaving.

The Vedanta Society, Providence. Founder and Leader—Swami Akhilananda : Founded in 1928, the Society has been permanently established in a short period of three years. This is not a little due to the ability, scholarship, and loving and genial disposition of Swami Akhilananda who has won many friends for the cause from the best classes of society. The magnificent three-storied building of the Society, donated by two American members, has a chapel, an auditorium, a library, an office, a special worship room, and living quarters and study for the Swami. Besides the usual Sunday Services, and classes on Hindu Scriptures on Tuesdays and Thursdays, the Swami has a busy programme of lectures in churches, synagogues and culture clubs, radio speeches, and social gatherings at the Society.

The Vedanta Society, Chicago. Founder and Leader—Swami Gnaneshwarananda : The Society owes its origin and its present flourishing condition to the versatility and uncommon abilities of its founder and leader. Though established only in 1930, the Society has a large group of steady and sincere students. The popularity of the work is indicated by the fact that the Swami has to address often packed halls. Sunday Services at Masonic Temple, two weekly classes on Hindu Scriptures accompanied with meditation and special courses in Hindu Psychology, meditation and philosophy either personally or through correspondence—are the important activities conducted by the Swami. The Society also holds parties, picnics, dinners, etc., occasionally, and gives performances in Hindu music in which the Swami is an expert.

The Vedanta Society, Portland. Leader—Swami Devatmananda : Founded in 1928 by Swami Prabhavananda, its present

leader took charge of it in 1932. In 1934 the Society moved to its permanent headquarters, the Vedic Temple—a two-storyed building situated in a respectable residential district. Besides Sunday Services, week-day classes, special devotional Services, and social gatherings, the Society also conducts a Women's League, a cultural and educational group consisting of women members and friends of the Society, which meets once in a month. Lectures, classes and forums in different parts of the city are also organised.

The Vedanta Society, Hollywood. Founder and Leader—Swami Prabhavananda : The Society, established in 1930, is permanently housed in the Vivekananda Home—the beautiful residence of a devoted disciple of Swami Vivekananda donated for the purpose of spreading the message of Vedanta. In a city where the truth seekers are often lost in the medley of pseudo-religion and cheap Yoga demonstration, the Society under the leadership of Swami Prabhavananda, who is both a spiritual leader and a true friend, is a welcome addition. His Sunday Services are often held in packed halls. On Thursdays he conducts a study class on standard works dealing with Hindu philosophy and Yoga. He has also started a new line of work, keenly appreciated by many American parents, consisting in classes every other Sunday for children, where non-sectarian principles of practical spiritual living are expounded through simple stories and inspiring biographies. To fulfil the great demand for the teaching, the Swami gives special series of lectures in different parts of the city, and holds meetings and study classes in branch centres outside it.

Vedanta Society, Washington. Leader—Swami Vividhananda : At the Society building situated in a prominent section of the capital city of the United States, Swami Vividhananda gives one public lecture on Sundays and holds two scriptural classes preceded by silent meditation. The Swami had done much literary work while in India. His lectures are often broadcast over the radio.

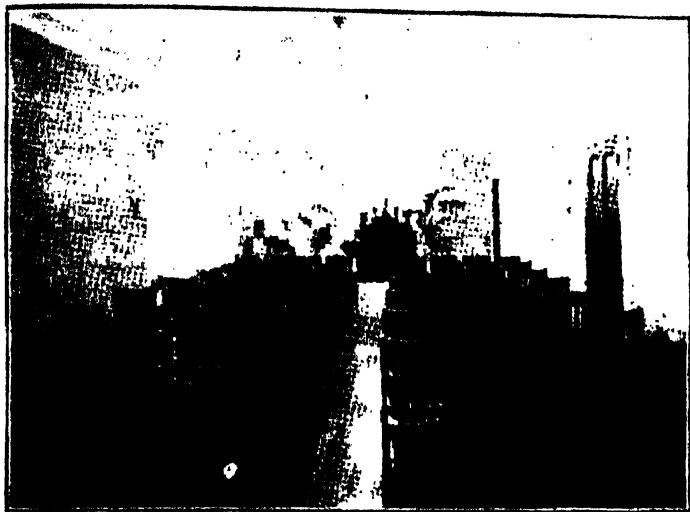
All the centres in the United States observe in a fitting manner the birthday anniversaries of the great teachers of the world, and some of them



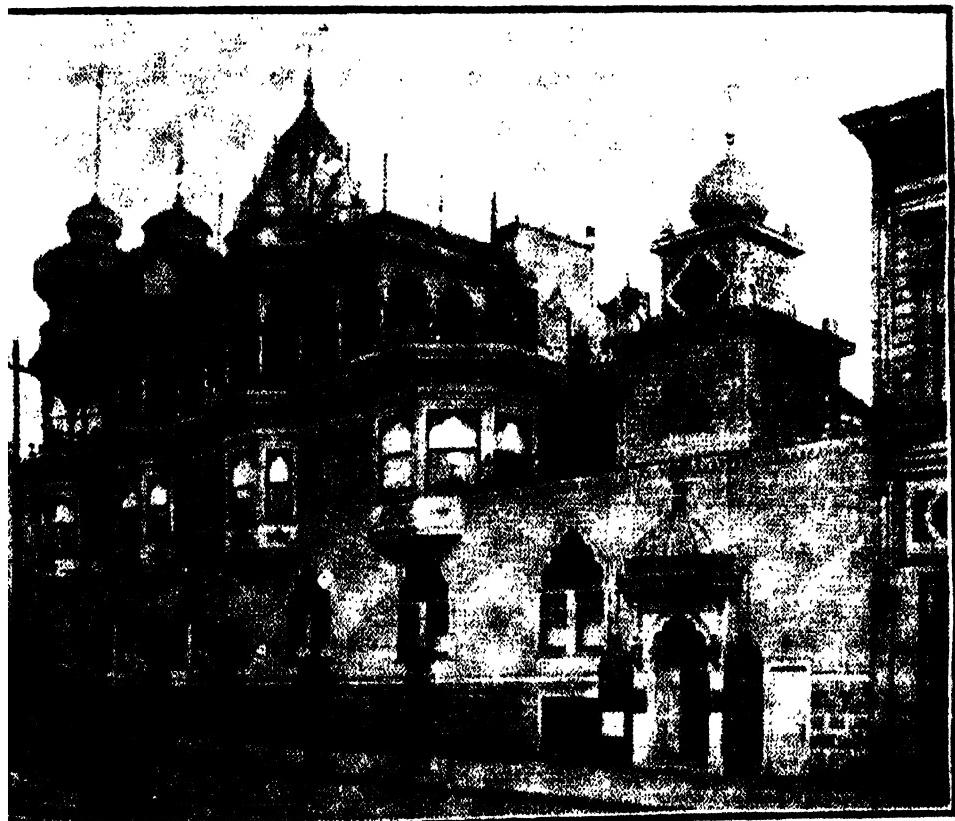
A view of the Ananda Ashrama, La Crescenta,
California



The Vivekananda Home, Hollywood



Chapel and Auditorium, Providence



The Hindu Temple, San Francisco, California

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observe also Hindu festivals like Durga Pooja and others. They maintain a large collection of Vedanta literature for sale.

IN SOUTH AMERICA

An interesting development of the Vedanta work of the Ramakrishna Mission in foreign lands is the starting in 1933 of a Ramakrishna Ashrama in Buenos Aires, the capital of Argentina republic of South America. Swami Vijayananda who is responsible for this work has met with unprecedented success in this land where the message of Hinduism is for the first time being heard. Every week the Swami holds five scriptural classes in the morning, attended regularly by 35 students, and 3 evening classes attended by about 60. The Swami has been delivering a very large number of public lectures to which his eloquence and forceful personality is attracting from 500 to 1,000 hearers. The Swami does all his preaching in Spanish. The Ashrama is going to undertake the translation of Swami Vivekananda's works in Spanish, and the publication of the addresses and class-talks of Swami Vijayananda. It has to be remarked that the Swami has gained this remarkable success in spite of the fact that the field of his labour lies in a Catholic country where he has to face the bitter opposition of powerful religious organisations.

IN EUROPE

The Vedanta work was first started in England by Swami Vivekananda, but it did not continue for a long time after his return. But since the arrival of Swami Avyaktananda in London in 1934, new efforts are being made to revive the work there. From March 1935 the Swami was having

three regular weekly engagements - a drawing-room talk in Streatham, a meditation class in the International Fellowship Club and a lecture in the heart of London. He also met several prominent Englishmen interested in Indian thought and lectured before many cultural associations on invitation. As a result of the interest created by the Swami's work, a Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Vedanta Society has been organised in London last year. Regular classes and lectures are held under the auspices of the Society, and new people are getting interested in the movement. The Society has made arrangements for celebrating the Birth-Centenary of Sri Ramakrishna in a fitting manner.

The Vedanta movement which was till recently influencing mainly the English speaking countries, is now making itself felt in the European continent also. The publication of Romain Rolland's books on Ramakrishna and Vivekananda in various European languages has for sometime prepared the ground for work. The next stage began when a group of earnest aspirants of Wiesbaden, Germany requested the Headquarters of the Ramakrishna Mission to send a spiritual teacher, and Swami Yatiswarananda, the then President of the Ramakrishna Math, Madras, was deputed in response to this request in November 1933. The Swami has since then been visiting important cities and cultural centres of Central Europe, forming groups of devotees and earnest students in the places thus visited. In Wiesbaden, Germany, there are three groups with whom the Swami spent the greater part of the first year of his stay, holding as many as 10 classes or more

a week. A good nucleus has been formed here. The Swami visited Switzerland in 1935 and is now trying to make it the base of his work in Central Europe. In Switzerland three groups have been formed, one at St. Moritz, another at Campfer and a third in Geneva. With each of these groups the Swami stays for a few months in the year holding classes. At Geneva talks were given to the members of the society of Friends and Bahai International Bureau, and the beginnings of a permanent group have been formed. In Zurich also the Swami has found a group of earnest students. Besides staying a few months with the groups already formed in these places, the Swami will shortly visit Paris and other cities where the admirers of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda want to start a permanent centre of work during the year of the Master's Centenary.

In addition to forming the nucleus of work in these places, the Swami also visited Cracow in Poland where his lectures were translated into Polish language.

Besides the work with groups, the Swami has established points of contact with many scholars and devotees in Germany, Switzerland and Poland. He has gained several highly gifted and spiritually minded devotees and friends for the movement, who have identified themselves with the cause and some of whom are giving all their time and energy for its growth.

Another work of permanent value is the scheme for the translation of Swami Vivekananda's four Yogas and Inspired Talks into German and French. Miss MacLeod, a close American friend of Swami Vivekananda and of the movement bearing

the name of his Master, has generously given the funds for the German translation, and also made a decent contribution towards bringing out the books in French which has already been undertaken by Mon. Jean Herbert. In addition to this a German journal named *Weibe Rabe* has undertaken to open its columns regularly for articles on Vedantic subjects. This will be of immense value in popularising Vedantic ideas.

"Up till now I am doing only the pioneering work," writes the Swami. "The number of those who are coming within the sphere of its influence and are being helped by it is steadily growing and will greatly increase after the books are published. So, as the trend of events clearly indicates, the Vedanta movement inaugurated by Ramakrishna-Vivekananda has come to stay in Europe. And it is going to be firmly established here before long for propagating the message of cultural synthesis and religious harmony, and promoting thereby a spiritual understanding and unity between the East and the West."

CONCLUSION

In conclusion we wish to remark that the Vedanta movement is not something foisted on the West by Indian teachers. It is only the response of India to the clearly expressed need of many people in the West for Indian spiritual ideals. The Swamis are only guests and carry no funds with them from India ; in America their expenses are borne wholly, and in Europe mainly, by their students. The work is still in its infancy, but even its present development has been possible because the people there want it. We cannot



Swami Vijayananda



Swami Vyakarananda



Swami Yatiswarananda

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better conclude this short account than by quoting partly from a letter of Dr. Horace J. Bridges, leader of *The Chicago Ethical Society*, addressed to one of the Swamis : "There are some of us who have felt in all seriousness that some sort of synthesis between Eastern and Western ideals is indispensable for the well-being of the world. We may perhaps be pardoned for thinking that the East may have something to learn from us in such matters as politics and government, the seeking of personal liberty under law, in science, and the organisation of material side

of life. But we must be very lacking in imagination and a true sense of values if we do not realise how much we have to learn from old philosophies which saw through the fallacy of materialism long before we in the West had done so, and which learned the great secret of insight through serenity and repose. If you can do anything to bring this blessing into the hectic life of America, we shall all be your debtors." We need not add that the same sentiment has been expressed by other well-wishers of the movement in other Western countries also.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA MOVEMENT IN AMERICAN LIFE

By Miss Helen F. Rubel

[Miss Rubel, otherwise known as Bhakti, belongs to the Vedanta Society of Providence, U.S.A. She has done great personal sacrifice to help the Ramakrishna movement both in India and America. Coming as it does from the pen of one who has been closely associated with the Ramakrishna movement and has derived spiritual benefits by this association, the reader will find in this article an authentic statement of what the movement is doing for Americans who come within its influence.]

HE message of Sri Ramakrishna was brought to the West by Swami Vivekananda just at the right time to counteract the insurmountable difficulties that were arising in its mental and emotional life. Towards the end of the Nineteenth Century, due to the great strides made by science, the old dispute between science and Christianity became intensified. The spread of education and easy communication caused this disagreement to have a more far-reaching effect in all phases of man's life.

Science was discovering facts about the age of the world and of the stars in geology and astronomy. It was coming upon some of the laws of mat-

ter in nature. In biology, especially, important was the defining of the law of heredity which brought on the struggle between Darwinism and Lamarckianism as to how man developed. Even philosophy was tending towards purely materialistic explanations and trying to use scientific methods. Philosophy is in any case intellectual rather than experimental, so that the conclusions are not very satisfactory.

People in their difficulties, and when trying to understand and explain life, turned to the Church as divinely inspired, but found there the Christian theory of creation, the doctrine of original sin, and an anthropomorphic, extra-cosmic God. There

was no place for the findings of science nor for the philosophically-minded and thoughtful man. When a person fails in business and therefore loses the power to provide sustenance for himself and his family, when there is mortal sickness, when a beloved one dies, man first turns to the Church. But the custodians of religion could not prove to his satisfaction nor say with authority based on experience that spirit exists nor that there is surely immortality. Christ told men to leave all and to follow Him to know His Father. He taught and showed a life of high moral conduct. But people with their minds bent on material desires heard not the greatest good and decided that the conduct he advocated was impracticable since it did not help them to gain their ends. To be truthful, they thought, might be virtuous, but it would not help them make money nor provide against the hard living conditions. The same with lying, and so on. Beset with increased material cares and desires, and disappointed at finding no help from the existing religion, man became atheistic or agnostic. He turned his entire attention to gaining whatever material pleasures he could in this short life of which he felt sure. He argued that, if all is material and there is no life hereafter, then man may do as he wants so long as he does not clash with the law.

But people are not happy nor satisfied with such conclusions. They feel innately within themselves a craving for higher things. Urged on by this and by their many troubles, they seek everywhere for help. Both good psychologists and pseudo-psychologists are resorted to, all manner of

lectures are attended one after another—all without satisfaction.

Finally the seekers come upon the Swamis. Those who are seeking merely sensation, aids to beauty or cures for old age, soon drop off. Those who remain are drawn by the all-comprehensive rationality of the theory of Vedanta with a path for every temperament ; or, more usually, simply by the personality of the Swami, bespeaking deep knowledge and experience. Science, they find, rather than being opposed to religion, is an integral part of it. There is a scientific method for those who prefer it. Lectures and interviews give psychological help and explanations to those nervously distracted with their myriad household cares. They are shown that their very work can be lightened and turned Godward. There is a devotional path to satisfy the seeking heart. All sincere seekers find help.

At the homes of the Society students feel a peace and restfulness which relaxes and refreshes them. There in the classes they hear of the value of meditation and are given the opportunity to try. At times of festivals, those who can, come together to prepare and to serve food, and learn from the Swami the highest method of work. Every centre has a library for members who wish to read but are not able to buy the books.

The different religions, Judaism, Catholicism and the various sects of Protestantism are now trying to bring harmony between them. For this purpose the religious leaders meet together to discuss and to hear lectures. They are beginning to invite the Swamis to join them and to tell of

the harmonisation of religions as shown by Sri Ramakrishna.

As yet the idea of the possibility, and therefore of the desirability, of realisation is not well-known. Even after living in America a number of

years it is hard to realise the far-reaching effect of this on the lives of the people. For the most part only those who remain with the Swamis for a length of time gain any desire for realisation, as it must come through renunciation.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S BIRTHDAY

The birthday anniversary of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna falls on the 24th of February 1936, and the annual celebration in connection with it will take place at the Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras, on Sunday, the 1st of March. The birthday this year being the Centenary of the Master, it will be celebrated in different places at different times from February 1936 to February 1937. We shall in future be giving more information about the centennial celebration in Madras and elsewhere; but meanwhile we draw the attention of the readers to the appeal in connection with it, published on the next page.

AN APPEAL

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In concluding this commemoration issue of the "Vedanta Kesari" we appeal to all our readers to extend their help in carrying out the plan drawn up by the Headquarters of the Ramakrishna Mission to do something of permanent value in memory of the holy occasion of Sri Ramakrishna's Birth-Centenary. There are three items in this programme that deserve special mention. These are : (1) the creation of a *Central Fund* for aiding the humanitarian activities of the Mission such as Relief Work during flood, famine and pestilence, etc., and mass education ; (2) the publication of the *Centenary Memorial Volume* dealing with the evolution of Indian thought and culture from the Vedic times ; and (3) the construction of a *Temple* for Sri Ramakrishna at Belur.

To carry out this plan a very large sum of money is required, and this has to be collected between February 1936-37, the year of the Centenary celebration. For the construction of the Temple, the major part of the necessary amount has been contributed by some devotees of Sri Ramakrishna in foreign lands. For the other items, however, money will have to be raised in this country itself. The splendid services of the Mission in the past in times of flood, famine and pestilence entitle its appeal in aid of a Central Fund for financing these operations, to a warm and liberal response from the public. The cultural value and comprehensiveness of the proposed Memorial Volume will be evident from the advertisement of it published elsewhere in this issue.

In the name of Sri Ramakrishna, the Saviour of India's cultural and spiritual ideals, we appeal to the generous public to come forward with liberal contributions, and thus participate in relieving the sufferings of the poor and the distressed, and in popularising India's cultural and spiritual ideals at home and abroad.

For the information of those who wish to contribute, we wish to state here that there is a system of membership which is open to all irrespective of caste, creed or nationality. The minimum fee is Rs. 5 (Rs. 3 for students) in India, Burma and Ceylon, and £ 1 or \$ 5.00 in foreign countries. Members will receive free of charge the Centenary Bulletins as they are issued from time to time. They will also be entitled to have at concession prices (1) the Centenary Memorial Volume (2) the Centenary Album and (3) the Memorial Medallion.

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Let me tell you, strength is what we want, and the first step in getting strength is to uphold the Upanishads and believe that "I am the Atman"

—Swami Vivekananda

THE VEDANTA KESARI

VOL. XXII]

APRIL 1936

[No. 12

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The following is the message of Srimat Swami Akhandanandaji Maharaj, the President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, at the inauguration of the Ramakrishna Birth-Centenary Celebrations on the 24th February, 1936 :

The dawn of the New Age is breaking over the world—the blessed day that will illumine our hearts with the glory of its effulgence is at hand.

Knowingly or unknowingly man is moving along the path of salvation inspired by the Master's message of the harmony of all religions and by his unique realisation of the essential oneness of Karma (action), Jnana (knowledge), Bhakti (supreme devotion) and Yoga (psychic control). The day is not far off when all lands and seas shall witness the establishment of a universal kingdom of peace, and when in loving response to the call of the Master, all nations and peoples, in one glorious confederation joining, shall sing with jubilant acclaim, yea, with no heat of strife and no passion of controversy, the Master's message—"As many faiths, so many paths." Then the full meridian light of the Master's advent will light up this world of ours and that song will ring from end to end, and the sons and daughters of men will stand side by side under the banner of the New Age in spiritual comradeship.

May the citizens of the world on this blessed day understand the meaning of the Master's coming and be hallowed! This and this alone is my fervent prayer.

Peace, Peace, Peace unto all!

SRI RAMAKRISHNA THE GREAT MASTER 484

By Swami Saradananda

[A striking event illustrating how even the apparently common acts of Sri Ramakrishna were often full of deep significance is narrated below.]

The Master always opens his heart to Mathuranath and seeks his advice.

MAHURANATH had nothing to hide from the 'Father,' so also the 'Father' would, at all times save the periods of ecstasy, look upon Mathur in the same way as a child does upon its mother or one friend upon another, laying bare his heart completely to him without any reserve, and consulting his views and cordially accepting his advice on all matters. We have already stated the verdict of our scriptures with regard to the condition of one who has risen to the highest step of spiritual knowledge,—that such a person appears to the public at large to be either crazy, or slovenly, or childish. This is not all. Sankara, the great world-teacher, has also stated in unambiguous language that such people ever remain absorbed in spiritual bliss derived from self-knowledge, without being distracted by external circumstances, no matter whether they are placed in the midst of what the world considers its greatest joy—the luxuries of an imperial palace, or whether they have to live a mendicant's life, subsisting on meagre alms, and dressing only in a single strip of loin-cloth.

कनिन्दूदो यिदूर् कविदपि महात्रविभगः
कविद्वामत्तसौम्यः कविद्वगरामवारकलितः ।
कवितामीमुः कविद्ववतः कवयविदित-
थर्त्येषं पाप्तः सततपरमानन्दसुखितः ॥

—Viveka-chudamani.

"A liberated soul moves about now as an idiot, now as a scholar, or again

as possessed of princely wealth. He appears to be sometimes a lunatic, and at other times perhaps quiet, steady and intelligent. Like a python* he may sometimes totally refrain from begging his food and other indispensable necessities. He may be highly honoured in some places and in others insulted, or again may remain quite unknown. But in every state he is unshaken and ever absorbed in supreme bliss."

When this has been said with regard to the souls that have attained liberation in this life, what wonder is there if the great incarnations of God likewise ever remain undistracted and behave like a child? Therefore there is nothing peculiar in the description we have given above of the behaviour of the Master towards Mathuranath. But it was the good fortune of Mathuranath to have been able to spend a pretty long period in such close association with the Master.

How the Master was mindful of Mathuranath's welfare.

How sweet indeed was the relation between the Master and Mathuranath! The Master, during the period of his spiritual practices, and in later life also, would at once inform Mathuranath of his requirements whenever he found himself in need of anything. The visions or feelings that were experienced by the Master in the states of ecstasy or at other

*The python is supposed to be motionless at one spot and live upon such food alone as chance may bring to its very mouth.

times were recounted to Mathuranath, and his views on them were eagerly sought. The Master was always particular to see that Mathuranath's money was usefully spent, that the property dedicated to the service of God was being actually utilised for that purpose and that monks, strangers and poor people were being fed with the offerings, so that great religious merit may accrue therefrom to Mathuranath. We have heard of numerous illustrations of the Master's close attention to all matters of like nature. Even long after the demise of the pious Rani Rasmani and Mathuranath, when we had all gathered round the Master, we noticed similar instances occasionally, one of which may not be out of place here.

The Master personally asks for the temple-offerings on a special day of worship.

There was an arrangement since Mathuranath's time that after the noon worship one tray of cooked things and another of fruits and sweets from the daily offerings should be regularly sent to the Master for his own use as well as for those who might be with him. Besides this, on festive occasions particularly, a portion of the special offerings was also to be sent to the Master.

Now every year on a particular auspicious day in the rainy season, there used to be a festival on a small scale in the temple. In accordance with the usual practice, various fruits were offered to the Divine Mother on this occasion, after the special worship. The concert was playing. Swami Yogananda and a few other devotees were with the Master.

Different kinds of ecstasy normally appearing in the Master on different auspicious days.

On particularly auspicious days the Master used to have ecstasies, the forms of which would always be relevant to the particular day of their appearance. On Vaishnava festivals he used to be in Vaishnava attitudes, while on the special days for Shakti-worship his attitudes would have special reference to the Shakti or the Mother of the Universe. As for instance, during the Durga Puja Celebration, and specially at the juncture of the eighth and the ninth lunar days, or on the occasion of the worship of Kali (an aspect of the Divine Mother like Durga) the Master would be filled with thoughts of the Divine Mother, and as a consequence all his physical movements would be suspended and even his person would sometimes take the same pose as that of the particular Deity in whom his mind was absorbed. But on the birth-days of Sri Krishna and similar other occasions, the eight-fold physical changes such as tremor of the body, the standing of the hairs on their ends and other signs associated with them would appear as a result of his being filled with the thoughts of Sri Krishna and Sri Radha. Moreover, these ecstasies would come so very naturally to him that they did not at all appear to be the results of any particular effort. Rather, it was often noticed that even though on a particularly holy day the Master might be wholly absorbed in discussing various topics with us, remaining quite forgetful of the special sanctity of the day, all of a sudden his mind would recoil from all external things and enter into an ecstasy relevant to the occasion, as if compelled to do so

by some other force. Many a time we experienced instances of this nature during the Master's residence at Shyampukur in Calcutta. While engaged in conversation with Dr. Mahendralal Sarkar and other devotees crowding his room, the Master once suddenly entered into an ecstasy just at the meeting point of the eighth and ninth days of the lunar month, which is considered a very auspicious moment in the Durga Puja celebration. Who could then guess by observing his countenance, beaming with a divine smile, which was in striking contrast to his usual pale look caused by the fatal disease, that he was the same person, or that he was at all suffering from any kind of illness ?

Similarly, on this particular festive day of the rainy season referred to before, the master was falling into ecstatic moods now and then. At times like a boy of five he was dancing and singing the praise of the Divine Mother in great delight. All present were gazing steadily at his face, being charmed by its heavenly beauty, and themselves too enjoying various spiritual experiences that were caused by the holy association with this man-god. The worship terminated almost towards the close of the night and people had little time to rest before day-break.

When it was about eight or nine o'clock in the morning the Master noticed that the portion of the offerings of last night, which was to come to his room according to the practice of the temple, had not been brought. He called Ramlal, his nephew and priest of the Kali temple, into his room and inquired about the cause of the delay. But the latter replied that all the offerings had been sent to the

manager's office as usual, and the shares of different persons were being distributed from there according to the regular practice. He could not say why the Master's share had not come as yet. This made the Master all the more anxious and impatient. He began to inquire about it of every person he met, and continued for sometime to harp on this one theme. After waiting fruitlessly for a short while in this manner, the Master put on his slippers and went personally to the manager inquiring, " Well, why has not the share for that room (pointing to his own room) been sent as yet ? Is it due to oversight ? It is very bad that such a long-standing custom should now be stopped through oversight ." The manager felt somewhat ashamed and replied, " Have not the things gone to your room as yet ? Very bad, indeed ! I am sending them immediately . "

*Swami Yogananda's thoughts on the
Master's demanding his share of
offerings in this manner.*

Swami Yogananda who was present in the Master's room on this occasion was then a mere boy. Born of a respectable family, he was not a little proud of his high pedigree and did not look upon the manager and the other employees and priests of the Kali temple as worthy of respect due to human beings, although he had dedicated himself at the feet of the Master on account of the latter's deep love and freely-bestowed mercy. Moreover, his house was almost adjacent to the temple garden. Hence it was very convenient for him to come to the Master every day. And how could he at all help coming there ? The wonderful attraction of the Master would drag him perforce to

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the temple at the usual hour. But simply because he held the Master in great regard, could he condescend to behave courteously towards the people of the temple ? Therefore, when the Master became impatient for his share of the offerings, Swami Yogananda could not refrain from making the remark : " What does it matter, sir, if the things have not come ? Are they so very important ? None of these things agrees with you, and you do not take them at all. What harm is there then if they do not send these ? " But when the Master did not pay any heed to the remark and after a short while went personally to the manager to inquire about the matter, Yogananda (Swami Yogananda) began to think within himself, " What a great wonder it is ! Why does the Master become so very anxious for such paltry things as these fruits and sweets ? Why does he behave in this manner to-day—he whom we have never seen losing his patience on any account ? " Failing to discover any other reason for this unusual behaviour of the Master, he came to the following conclusion : " Now I have understood," thought he, " none can escape his hereditary influence, be he the Master or any other person of great eminence. The Master is born in a family of priests who are for generations in the habit of collecting such petty articles of food as are offered to the Deity. Now this

hereditary habit must be in him at least in a small degree. It is nothing but this that causes this unusual behaviour of the Master. Otherwise, why is he so anxious for them, even though he himself cannot use any of them ? It is nothing but the family trait."

The Master adduces the reason for his anxiety.

By the time Swami Yogananda had arrived at the above conclusion, the Master returned and told him, " Do you know why I am so very particular about these things ? Rani Rasmani had given away all this property to the temple so that after the service of the Deity the offerings might be distributed among monks and devotees. The portion of offerings received here is taken only by devotees who come for God-realisation, and thereby the object of the Rani's gift is fulfilled.

" But what use is made of the things that are taken by those people (the priests and other employees of the temple) ? They sell away the rice and make money out of it. Some of them have got their prostitutes who are fed with these fruits and sweets. That is how these things are used. I fight so much so that the motive behind this gift of Rani Rasmani may be fulfilled at least partially." Swami Yogananda was surprised to hear that there was so much hidden meaning even behind this simple act of the Master.

THE GOSPEL OF ENERGISM

[The following paragraphs are reflections on the recent English translation of Lokamanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak's great Marathi work—"Sri Bhagavadgita-rahasya or Karma-yoga-matra, Vol. I, translated by B. S. Sukthankar, and published by Tilak Bros., Lokamanya Tilak Mandir, 568, Narayan Peth, Poona City; price (in India) Rs. 6. The translation and the get-up are excellent.]

The opposition between work and knowledge.

NO feature of Indian thought is likely to perplex the modern mind to the same extent as the very lively controversy that has raged in this country round the place of work in spiritual striving and perfection. The literature on this subject, perhaps the most important contribution of India to world's ethical thought, is as vast in extent as it is complicated in nature. Many a modern thinker may view a greater portion of this age-long controversy as a waste and a misdirection of intellectual energy, but that the issue is still a live and significant one to the Indian intellect is evident from the fact that no less a man than the late Lokamanya B. G. Tilak thought it a fitting theme for his masterly work—the Gita-rahasya, on which the following paragraphs constitute some stray reflections.

It is worthy of note that the occasion for this masterpiece of Indian philosophic thought, as in the case of many a great work in the history of Indian philosophy in the past, is the writings of Acharya Sankara—that most provocative of Indian thinkers whom neither his friends nor foes can afford to neglect. More than 1,000 years ago Sankara wrote his commentary on the Bhagavad Gita whose main purpose, as is plain even to a casual reader, was to revive the drooping spirit of the heroic Arjuna, and make him participate in the

Kurukshetra war in preference to his proposed philosophic abandonment of action. From the very nature of its setting and the trend of its discourses the Gita seems to resolve the contradiction that Arjuna finds between a life of inwardness and a life of action, by the theory that no embodied being can divorce from one another the threefold faculty of his personality,—viz., feeling, willing and thinking,—and that the most efficient and natural form of spiritual discipline, suited to the needs of men in general, must therefore take cognisance of all these three faculties and effect the harmony of Bhakti, Karma and Gnana or Devotion, Action and Knowledge, which are based respectively on the three aspects of personality mentioned above. To Sankara, however, such a combination or Samuchchaya of Gnana and Karuna as the highest means for spiritual realisation is unthinkable. For him Reality is in essence subject-objectless, and the polarity of subject and object can at best be described only as an appearance which is negated on the dawn of illumination. What obstructs the cognition of the subject-objectless nature of Reality is ignorance (Avidya), a form of metaphysical error which is at the root of our illusory perception of duality. Error can be overcome only by its opposite, right knowledge, which consists in the recognition of the identity of the individual self with the Universal Self.

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This is purely a matter of cognition or Gnana, and work has no direct function in it. The trend of this knowledge is to obliterate the distinction between the triad of the knower, knowledge and the object known or between the actor, action and the object acted upon. On the other hand all action done either with desire or without desire, emphasises these distinctions. Hence according to Sankara there is an inherent opposition between action and the discipline of knowledge which reveals the changeless and subject-objectless nature of Reality. At one stage of his development, the spiritual aspirant is therefore required to give up all action and engage himself exclusively in hearing of, thinking about and meditating on the unity of the individual self with the universal Self. Without this, nescience is never overcome. Action, however, plays no direct part in overcoming nescience. At best it endows the mind with the necessary purity required for the successful practice of the discipline of knowledge. Once this purity is gained action is to be renounced, especially seeing that there is an opposition between it and the higher stages of spiritual development. According to Sankara therefore the various stages of spiritual awakening consist in : (1) the purification of mind by disinterested action, (2) the first dawn of knowledge, (3) the renunciation of all actions, and (4) the state of being established in Brahman.

If this is the philosophical and ethical implication of Vedanta, the Gita, as an authoritative work on the subject, must support this doctrine. Especially must this be so because Bhagavan Sri Krishna, the author of the Gita, calls himself the knower of

the Vedas and the author of the Vedanta. Hence according to Sankara the apparent intermingling of action and knowledge in the spiritual scheme of the Gita must have some other significance. Really there is no such intermingling. For the Gita has in view two different grades of aspirants—on the one hand the beginners who have not yet gained purity of mind and whose duty therefore consists in action, and on the other the adepts who are required to abandon all actions. The Gita being a message mainly delivered for the benefit of Arjuna who was fit only for action, it may contain many passages enjoining action ; but in view of the distinction between types of aspirants, such passages need not in any way be taken as supporting the combination of action and knowledge. As for the examples of the few sages who are reputed to have persisted in the duty of action even after illumination, the explanation offered is, that as their caste did not entitle them to adopt the life of Samyasa, it will be setting a bad example to people if they took to that order and renounced action. Moreover in the case of such perfectly illumined sages, it is improper to say they must act or must not act. It can only be said that they may or may not act guided by their Prarabda ; but such work is mere mechanical action, and being devoid of the sense of ego and agency, it is not to be called action at all. Such is the main trend of Sankara's interpretation of the Gita.

Tilak's view : there is no such opposition.

We have made this brief review of Sankara's interpretation of the great scripture, because, as we have said

before, this monumental work of Tilak is a criticism of Sankara in some important respects. On the question of metaphysics, namely, the relation between Brahman and the Universe, Tilak is at one with Sankara. He maintains with that great philosopher that according to the Bhagavad Gita the world of change is only a super-imposition on Brahman, as the snake is on a rope in an illusory perception. But he totally disagrees with Sankara on the point that this philosophy necessarily implies the ethics of Karmasannyasa (abandonment of action), and much more on the interpretation of the Gita as preaching such a doctrine to be the crown of ethical life. To avoid misconception it must be stated at the outset that Tilak has no quarrel with the fourth Ashrama, if it means wearing the ochre robe, leading a celibate life, or living outside towns. He admits that such a mode of life is often more favourable for practising the ethical ideal of service to society which the Gita upholds. His antagonism is really towards that outlook on life which says that man, whether it be in the state of a Sadhaka (aspirant) or in that of a Siddha (perfected one), should sit quiet, giving up worldly activities of every kind, including unselfish service of society. He does not, however, deny that the Gita admits the existence of even such a mode of spiritual life. In the Upanishads this ideal of Actionlessness looms large while that of Energism or disinterested action, which is also recognised as an independent path, is given a less important position. The Gita, however, reverses the position, and while admitting the existence of the path of worklessness, concentrates its attention mainly on

the ethics of Energism. The important point to be noted is that in Tilak's view, the Upanishads and the Gita recognise both these paths of Actionlessness and Energism as quite independent and self-sufficient methods of discipline suited to the needs of two types of aspirants. But the Upanishads specialise in Actionlessness, and the Gita mainly develops the ethics of Energism. Tilak maintains that in doing this the Gita does not contradict the Upanishadic view, but only fulfils the necessary function of elaborating the full implication of the Upanishads in respect of some doctrines existing in a germinal form in them. The direct meaning of the Gita need not therefore be abandoned in favour of far-fetched implications with a view to show its harmony with the Upanishads. The harmony will be quite patent when the Gita's declaration of the independence of the two paths is adequately recognised. The trouble arises only when one attempts, as Sankara does, to relegate the ethics of Energism to a subordinate position as forming merely a preparation for renunciation of actions; and to this Tilak vehemently protests. In the pre-realisation state, action no doubt goes to purify the mind, but there is no stage in spiritual life when the Gita requires the aspirant of the path of Energism to give up action. No doubt it is Gnana or Knowledge alone that gives illumination; but Karma or action is in no way incompatible with it. The real incompatibility is between Gnana and works done with desire, not between Gnana and desireless action. Not only does the Gita find no opposition between knowledge and desireless action, but on the other hand

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looks upon the harmonious combination of both, as the better and the more desirable of these two independent paths—that of Actionlessness and that of Energism. It is for this reason that Arjuna is repeatedly asked to adopt the path of Energism—not because he is an inferior type of aspirant as some contend. Arjuna too understands the teaching of the Gita in this light. Arjuna's doubt in the beginning is whether the life of Actionlessness or of Energism is preferable, and after hearing the whole discourse and getting himself disillusioned, he declares triumphantly—I shall do according to your words. And it is in recognition of its specialisation in the doctrine of Energism that the Gita styles itself as *Yoga-sastra*, the word *Yoga* signifying according to the Gita 'equanimity' and 'skill in action.' Tilak also points out that the Gita itself gives reasons for its view that the path of Energism is superior. From the point of view of the individual's salvation both the paths may be equal in value, but Karma Yoga has got the distinct superiority that its significance extends to the world at large also. According to the Gita Gospel of Energism, the enlightened man must necessarily act. The follower of the path of Actionlessness does not act, because he has no desire of his own. The Gita asks the enlightened Karma Yogn to act for the very same reason. Because he has no object of his own to gain, he is best qualified to act unselfishly and disinterestedly. What the ignorant man does from a sense of bondage, the wise man does from a sense of freedom and large-heartedness. He must act, also because he is the best agent for the conservation of Society—*Lokasangraha*. If all

such persons were to withdraw from action, the world will be left desolate without any moral and spiritual guidance. For the wise men are not only the eyes but the preceptors of society as well. Without their living example the world will not understand even what is meant by acting desirlessly. The Gospel of Energism as facilitating this great purpose is looked upon by the Gita as superior to Actionlessness—*Karma-yoga visishyate*.

The ethics of Energism is the highest ideal of conduct according to the Bhagavata religion of which the Bhagavad Gita is an important exposition. On the other hand the ethics of Actionlessness is the highest ideal of the Smarts conception of life. The Gita recognises the latter path, but gives preference to the former, since it involves the principle of renunciation, the central ideal of *Sannyasa-marga*, and serves also the additional purpose of *Lokasangraha*. It is also natural that the Gita which forms the Upanishad of the Mahabharata, the encyclopaedic work on Dharma, should devote itself specially to the path of Energism and not to Actionlessness.

An estimate : the two methods.

In the above paragraphs we have tried to disentangle the main trend of Tilak's interpretation from the scholarly discussions of philosophical and ethical problems with which the book abounds. Now which of the two is correct—Sankara or Tilak? is the question that will naturally arise in the reader's mind. One feels rather nervous to sit in judgment over such master-minds and the products of their mature genius. Yet, we suppose, after reading these works, no one can help

forming an impression regarding their comparative merits, and it is no disrespect to these great personages if one gives expression to such impressions in a spirit of reverence and humility. A person who first studies the Gita text intelligently and then tries to understand Sankara and Tilak, cannot but feel that there is somewhere a twist in the thought of both, which is not in agreement with the original, and that they therefore fail to convince him while exacting the full measure of his admiration for the great scholarship and dialectical skill displayed in them. To a large extent one may be impressed by the ethical ideal that Tilak holds forth, but yet one feels there is a serious defect somewhere in the argument, which consequently leaves one unconvinced. We shall try to ascertain the reason for this in the remaining portion of this essay.

Just as Tilak points to the existence of two parallel traditions of ethical life—the ideal of Actionlessness and the ideal of Energism—so also there have been in existence in this country two main currents of Vedantic thought and two methods of spiritual discipline corresponding to them. There are on the one hand Upanishadic passages which are Nirguna and Nishprapancha in tone—i.e., describe the Supreme as a qualitiless and impersonal absolute and the universe as non-existent (acosmism). The discipline prescribed for this realisation is described as the 'Neti' 'Neti' method, which consists in denying all manifestations as illusory or non-existent until the consciousness reaches a subject-objectless state which though indescribable is yet blissful. On the other hand there are passages in the Upanishads which

describe the Supreme as qualitiful, a Personality endowed with all auspicious attributes, and the Universe as a real manifestation of this Deity. These passages are therefore Saguna and Suprapancha in their trend. The spiritual discipline based upon this world-view does not consist in negation but in the recognition that all manifestation comes from Him and is included in His being. In contrast to the 'Neti' 'Neti' method, this is sometimes described as the 'Iti' 'Iti' method. The first is the Gnana Marga and the second is the Bhakti Marga. Now it has been the ambition of every commentator on the Upanishads to reconcile these two kinds of passages, and the usual method followed has been the subordination of one set of passages to the other set. Of these attempts at reconciliation, Sankara's interpretation is one of the most brilliant, and has been one of the most influential too in Indian philosophic thought. The purpose of his commentaries has been to assert uncompromisingly the supremacy of the Attributeless Absolute, granting at the same time the theistic implications of the Saguna passages. This he has achieved by the clever device of admitting a God and Universe as long as the state of ignorance persists, but which, being only an illusion and a super-imposition on the Absolute, disappear on the dawn of knowledge. Devotion to God and service of the world are good as far as they go, i.e., help the purification of the mind, but after that they are of no use and have to be discarded as illusions, since the process of Gnana lays the axe at the root of even these conceptions.

While this reconciliation of Sankara has been satisfactory to those whose intellectual outlook favours acosmism



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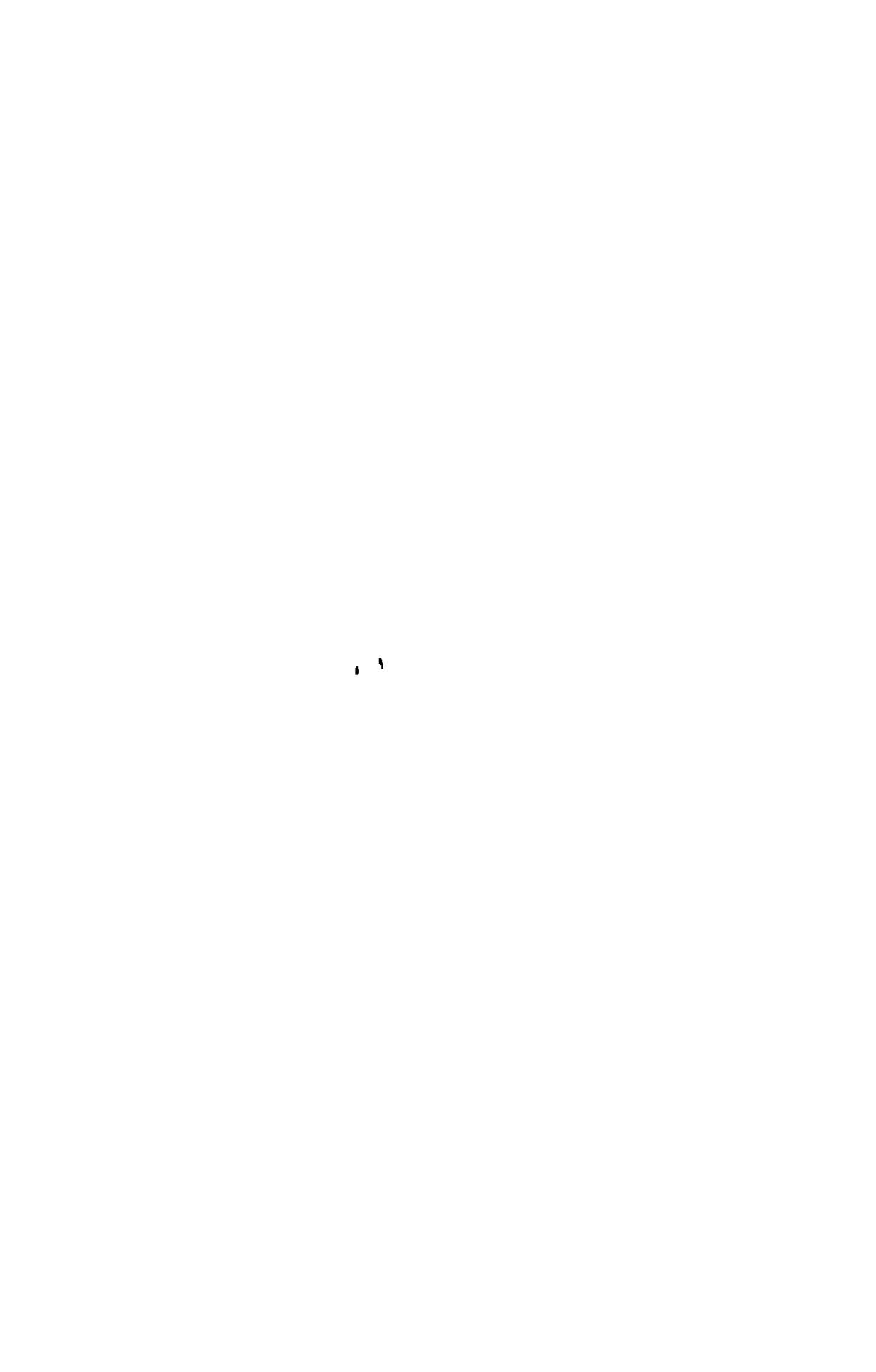
and an Attributeless Absolute, theists have never accepted it as a reconciliation at all. They feel that any reconciliation through an illusory God and Universe is only adding insult to injury. The various schools of Theism have laid emphasis on the Saguna and Saprapancha passages of the Upanishads and have attempted reconciliation in their own way by subordinating the passages of the other type to them. To raise the question as to which of them is the ultimate truth is quite fruitless. Both these may be described as two readings of an experience, and since they both serve the intellectual and ethical needs of two different types of aspirants, they may be given an equally honoured place among the various philosophical systems.

The real weakness of Tilak's contention

Now coming to the Bhagavad Gita, just as a disinterested reader, as Tilak contends, will recognise Energism to be its main teaching, so also he will perceive that the Gita worldview always centres round a loving and lovable God. God or Purushottama, no doubt, is the one existence, but the souls and insentient matter constitute his higher (Para) and lower (Apara) Prakriti. That His Prakriti (Nature) is an illusion is hardly to be met with in the Gita. On the other hand in the spiritual experience that the disciple is vouchsafed in the Visvarupadarsana, the whole cosmos and its activities are revealed as integral with the Lord. The souls are His Amsa (parts), and in that sense they also are He. They may gain perfect union with Him, may enter into Him, as Gita puts it. But that does not in any way make the

world or the Jiva illusory, nor is it stated that this merger in God makes Him a myth.

The Gita ethics of Energism is a legitimate consequence of this world-view. Energism and the doctrine of an illusory God and universe cannot co-exist, and when Sankara discovers a contradiction between them, he is essentially right. However much one may differ from Sankara's interpretation of the Gita, to find fault with his logic is quite futile. The metaphysics and ethics of Sankara are fully consistent. If he is to be challenged, it can be done only from the point of view of textual interpretation. The weakness of Tilak's great work lies in the fact that he joins with Sankara in cutting at the root of the tree of the universe, but while Sankara will allow the tree to fall down, Tilak wants to keep it erect still. For, to call the world an illusion, and then to speak of Lokasangraha is to speak somewhat unintelligible language. Once you understand the illusory nature of an object, you no longer take it seriously. Nor will you think of perpetuating it, especially when you find it misguides many and brings them to grief. As Sankara remarks, once a person discovers the mirage to be only a desert, he will never think of quenching his thirst from its waters. Lokasangraha therefore is out of the question when it is granted that the world is illusory. Once you have got a glimpse of its illusory nature, give it up and all its activities and engage yourself fully in recognising the reality behind the illusions, otherwise you may again be captivated by the illusion. This is Karmasannyasa. Of course, mechanical action may continue, but how can mere mechanical action be called

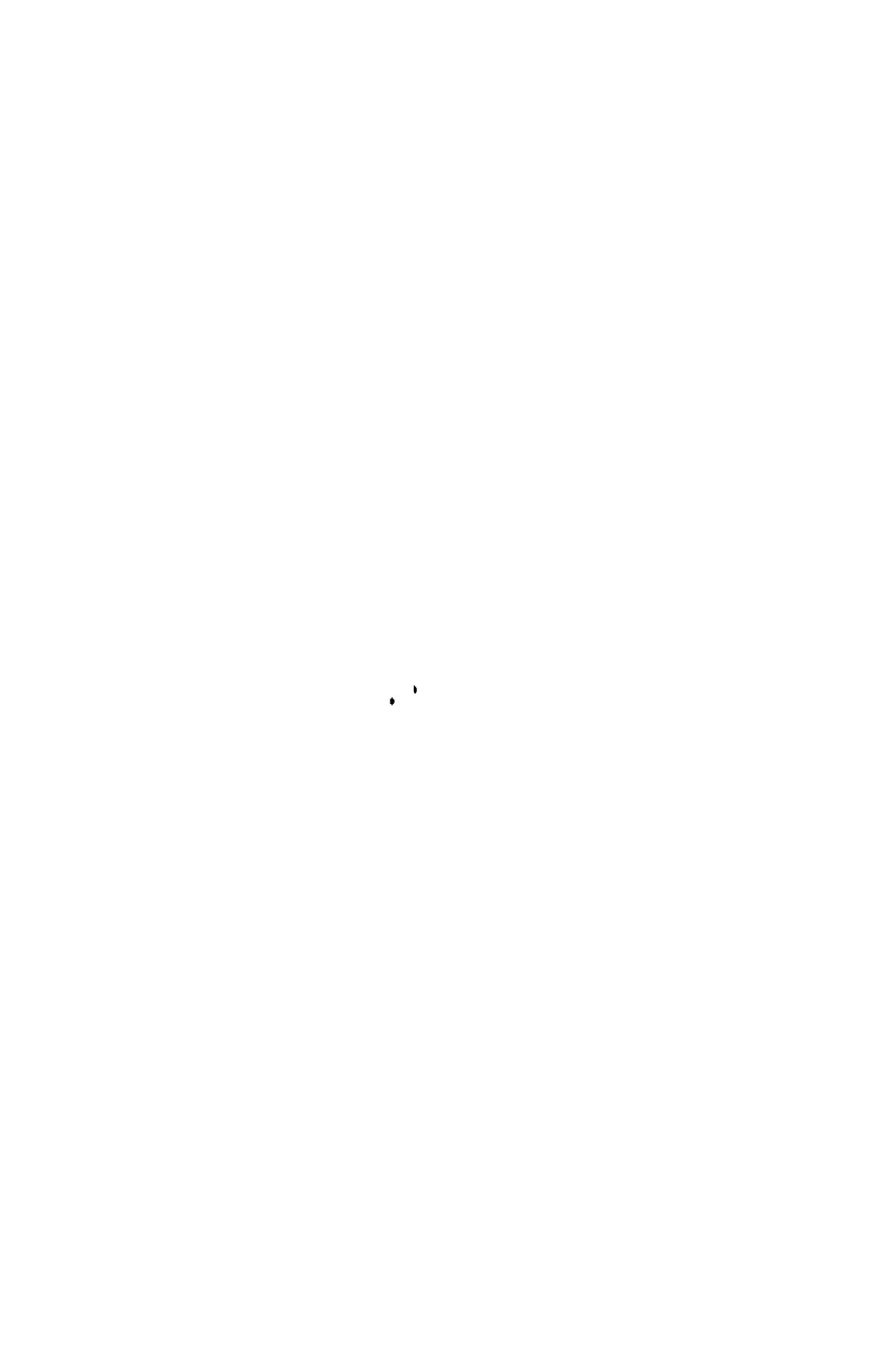


Lokasangraha. For, that conception involves the idea that there is a world and that there are some social values to be conserved. To speak of conserving these when they no longer exist, is again to speak unintelligible language.

While dealing with the place of devotion in the Gita, Tilak himself perceives the difficulty of reconciling that ideal with the conception of the Attributeless Brahman. He plainly states in this connection that when with the dawn of knowledge the trinity of the worshipper, the worshipped and the worship is at an end, and the identity of the Jiva with Brahman is ultimately realised, then there is no further place for what we ordinarily call devotion. Unfortunately Tilak does not realise that this is the very reason why Sankara finds incompatibility between Karma (action) and Gnana (knowledge) and insists upon Karma-sannyasa as the duty of those on whom knowledge has dawned. In Tilak's attempt to show that there is no opposition between Gnana and desireless Karma, he has not adequately refuted Sankara's contention in favour of such opposition from the subject-objectless nature of Advaitic realisation and from the inward-going tendency of the Gnana discipline as contrasted with the outward-going tendency of all action. The only important argument he advances against this position is as follows: Sankara's Advaita admits that some wise men may act if their Prarabdha necessitates it. If some may thus act, why not say all must act, seeing that the possibility of contamination arising from action is already denied in the case of the wise man. This capacity of the wise man to be aloof even while acting is interpreted by Tilak as the

absence of opposition between Karma and Gnana. But on the premises of the Mayavada School of Advaita, such action can only be mechanical, springing as it does, from the momentum of past deeds. It is difficult to understand how such action can in any sense be described as Lokasangraha (preservation of the world order), seeing that the word implies on the part of the actor a conscious attitude towards the world, a purposive will behind his action and either an egoistic feeling that he is working for the good of the world or an awareness that the mighty Cosmic Will or Power is making him a mere instrument of its purposive activities. In the system of the Mayavadin none of these necessary ideas connected with Lokasangraha can have any place ultimately. But the Gita does accept the ideal of Lokasangraha, and this it reconciles with the conception of spiritual perfection and attenuation of the ego, by its theory that the perfect man becomes an instrument in the hand of God—not, it must be noted, in the hands of mere Prarabdha. Nimittamatram bhava Savyasachin, "Be thou but an instrument"—is its characteristic ideal of the spiritualised action of the perfect man. But once we accept this ideal of the Gita, we pass from Advaita of the Mayavada type to Advaita with a more vigorous and vital strain of theistic thought.

The weakness of Tilak's Gita-rahasya therefore springs from his having divorced the essentially theistic world-view of the Gita from its ethics of Energism, and having attempted to unite the latter with an incompatible philosophic partner, namely, Mayavada. Sankara, as we have said before, is very consistent in having



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coupled the ethics of Naishkarmya (actionlessness) with his doctrine of Maya, and hence his interpretation of the Gita has a structural unity and strength, although many will be inclined to view his theory on the whole as not having sufficient ground in the text of the Gita. Tilak's faithfulness to Sankara's metaphysics while remaining hostile to his ethics, leaves one with the impression that he has travelled half way and stopped somewhere in the middle of the road, that he has given the true ethical import of the Gita but not provided it with a philosophical background consistent with that import and sanctioned by the text.

To avoid misconception, we must in conclusion give a word of explanation for calling the Gita world-view essentially theistic. An ardent follower of Sankara may pounce upon us indignantly for saying that the Advaita of the Mayavada type is not elaborated in the text of the Gita. Our reply to this attitude is that no reason for such resentment will be found to exist, if we look upon the world-views and codes of conduct presented by scriptures not as so many infallible dogmas but as theological and ethical constructions suited to the needs of aspirants treading different types of spiritual discipline. We have mentioned in an earlier section of this essay that there are two distinct methods of such discipline—the negative ('Neti' 'Neti') and the positive ('Iti' 'Iti') methods. A world-view depicting the whole sphere of dual existence as illusory is essential for the negative method, and most of the Upanishads and Sankara's system of thought give the theoretical back-

ground for this kind of discipline. The positive method however requires a world-view that is both theistic and realistic; for, this discipline consists chiefly in the practice of Bhakti and of work as an aid to it. Both these are impossible, at least to many men, without accepting the reality of a loving and lovable God, and of a world order the service of which is identical with the service of God. The Gita and the other Bhakti scriptures have elaborated a world-view suited to this system of spiritual discipline. The goal of both the systems is the same, namely, the manifestation of the divinity in man, but just as their methods differ, so may their world-views too. If we look at the problem from this stand-point, no necessity arises for proving through subtleties of interpretation that the Maya theory and the ethics of Naishkarmya form a part and parcel of the teachings of the Gita.

Because Tilak did not recognise this fact, his monumental work suffers from a structural disharmony, although it occupies a foremost place among the creations of modern Indian genius. While it adequately conveys the spirit of Energism characteristic of the Gita, it is without the sustaining force and warmth of a devotional out-look and of a theistic and dynamic world-view which form the necessary counterpart of the ethics of Energism. For this more complete and synthetic interpretation of the Gita, for the philosophical theory that can sustain the ethical ideal that Tilak insists upon, one has to turn from Tilak's great work on the Gita to the remarkable writing on it by another great living thinker of modern India.



THE VEDANTIC LEAVEN IN CONTEMPORARY 496 THOUGHT OF THE WEST

By Prof. K. S. Ghosh, M.A.

[The claim of Vedanta to be a universal gospel of life can be maintained only if it embodies principles and lines of thought that strike the human mind in its natural development. Every claim to uniqueness or speciality in the case of a revelation seems to contradict its aspiration to universality. The following article of Mr. K. S. Ghosh, Professor of Philosophy, Hasaribagh College, shows how some of the fundamental principles of Vedanta like its methodology of inwardness, its analysis of personality into Koshas and its new development of an activistic ethics all find correspondence in the systems of progressive thinkers of the West. The line of study suggested by Professor Ghosh is a fascinating one, and it will be good if others take up the question for a thorough discussion.]

I

WILLIAM James has somewhere said that a subject of cognition is to be found wherever its object is. A physicist similarly may claim that a tiny atom is co-extensive with the field of its attraction. This is assuredly true of a creative Ideal like the Vedanta. It is pervasive like the atmosphere and as such transcends all geographical limits, all narrow bounds of race or clime.

The Vedantic leaven seems to have leavened up a great mass of religious idealism of the West. The contact between Vedanta and Western thought has sometimes been traced beyond Pythagoras. History perhaps will never completely disclose how far the ancient mystery-cults in the Egyptian and Greek soils and their cognate speculations were influenced by the visions of the Upanishadic Rishis. We are not now, however concerned with ancient history but simply with some modern phases of thought. The Vedantic commentators may seem to differ as to the ontology of Vedanta but there is a remarkable agreement between them as to its methodology. It is to one or two aspects of the

Vedantic methodology that I shall confine myself in this essay.

Coleridge rightly maintains that Truth always suffers from its definition. Nothing great can be shut up in a conceptual scheme. Vedanta is no exception to the rule. If the emancipation of its methodology is attempted at all, it should be given the most catholic and comprehensive interpretation. The canon of Vedantic interpretation may roughly be summed up in the following words—*The clue to the beyond is to be found within.* It is the one principle that has led to the salvaging of modern Philosophy of Religion. This alone enables an inquirer after the truth of religion to chalk out a path between suffocating agnosticism on the one hand and a crass realism on the other. A study of religion will forget this principle to its peril.

Deussen in his great work on the philosophy of the Upanishads significantly remarks: "If ever a general solution is reached of the great riddle which presents itself to the philosopher in the nature of things, all the more clearly the further our knowledge extends, the key can only

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be found there alone where the secret of nature lies open to us from within, that is to say, in our innermost self. It was here that for the first time the original thinkers of the Upanishads, to their immortal honour, found it when they recognised our Atman, our inmost individual being, as the Brahman, the inmost being of Universal Nature and of all her phenomena."

This transition from the 'Within' to the 'Beyond' is the method of Vedanta. This may be called the Transcendental Method. One may try however to get an insight into the 'Within' from the 'Beyond.' This is the empirical method—the method of science. Science has achieved wonders in the phenomenal field but has so far failed to give us an insight into the heart of Reality. Its brilliant achievements are but scratchings at the periphery of Being. The secret of existence remains sealed to the empirical method. Can the other method help us? Morton Prince, the great American psychologist, seeks to offer an answer to the question in the following way: We see the cosmic process only, neither its beginning nor its end. To an ordinary mind the world appears to be discontinuous. It is a theatre of action and reaction of bodies in one unending space and time. The science of chemistry then dissolves the body into tiny atoms which are supposed to be indestructible. Then comes the theory of ether which envisages the physical world as a continuous ocean of an imponderable fluid. But this continuity is broken up again when we are told that an atom is a miniature world in itself, in which electric charges go round a nucleus after the fashion of planets round the sun. Here continuity

seems to be broken up. Again the wave-mechanics, we are told, re-establish continuity with the hypothesis that each electron is a bunch of waves. This may again be superseded by a physics of discontinuity. Thus the pendulum of physics swings between continuity and discontinuity, and this seems to be an unending process. The pathway to Reality does not therefore seem to be in this direction. Can we find any light within? When we look in all seriousness within us, a new world is revealed to us—it is the world of eternal values—of the ideals of the True, the Good and the Beautiful. The self-disclosure of the soul, this intimation of the spirit to itself, gives us an insight into the heart of Reality. The conviction grows in us that Nature is no longer foreign to us—it is the revelation of the Spirit; it is the time vesture of Eternity. This assurance is the one foundation on which religion and morality can stand. "For in truth the real essence of every religious belief," says Paulsen "is the assurance that the true nature of Reality reveals itself in that which I love and reverence as the highest and best; it is the certainty that the good and perfect, towards which the deepest yearning of my will is directed, forms the origin and the goal of all things." Yes, from the Within to the Beyond, from the inner to the outer—there is no other way to the temple of Truth. "Perhaps if we look into our own selves," says Emile Boutroux, the great French thinker, "if we seek a Beyond, no longer without, but within, we shall have more chance of success than we had during our search for an outer Beyond in the world of the senses, of the imagination, and of spatial measure." May

I not claim that the Rishis knew the secret of this success and exclaimed, "The Self, smaller than the small, greater than the great is hidden in the heart of this embodied being. He who is free from desire, sees, with his grief gone, the Lord and his Majesty through the grace of the Ordainer."¹

II.

I crave the indulgence of the reader to pursue another line of thought. The doctrine of the Koshas or sheaths in the Upanishads is to all students of Vedanta well-known. Some Indian commentators of the Vedanta rightly interpret the doctrine in the language of modern science. The Annamaya, the Pranamaya, the Manomaya, the Vignanamaya and the Anandamaya Koshas may be said to represent the different layers of self and, for the matter of that, of Reality. The Vedantic method of realisation of Truth is one of progressive transcendence. When we leave behind the Annamaya Kosha, we reach the Manomaya Kosha, on leaving this behind, we come in touch with the Pranamaya Kosha, and so on. Interpreted in the language of modern science, it may be said that when the Reality is conceived as material, it is studied by the physical group of sciences. But this is the lowest vision that we can have of Reality which next reveals itself as Life; it is then treated of by the biological group of sciences. At the next higher level Reality appears as mind; it is then the turn of the psychological group of sciences to study it. But

when we rise higher up still in the scale of vision, the universe appears to us as the field for the realisation of Vignana or self-consciousness or Spirit. It is then the turn of the metaphysical group of sciences to come to grip with it. Here the tether of science comes to an end. Reality from this point seems to be beyond the sounding line of the sciences and philosophy. In order to reach the Anandamaya Kosha, i.e., the heart of Reality, we are required to leave behind us sciences and philosophy and take to the method of spiritual realisation or the mystic method which alone leads us to our goal. The author of the Brahmasutras is emphatic on the point when he says: Nityopalabdhī Svarupatvat and again Svayamjyoti Svarupatvat (Brahma-sutra I. 3. 22).

It is gratifying to note that this very fruitful method of spiritual quest has been adopted to some extent by so many thinkers of note in the West also. When Prof. J. S. Haldane's remarkable Gifford Lectures on Sciences and Philosophy, delivered in the University of Glasgow in 1927-28, first came into my hands, it appeared to me to be a most remarkable justification of the Vedantic position put forward by a renowned scientific philosopher of Great Britain. In the preface to this work, he pays a handsome tribute to his great brother the late Lord Haldane in the following words: 'I was still a medical student at the time, after an Arts course during which, owing mainly to my brother's influence, my chief interest was in philosophy.' I need not remind the readers of this Vedantic journal that the late Lord Haldane was a great admirer of Hindu thought; and the massive structure of

¹ अनोदीप्तम् भृतो महीयम्

आत्मा तुहारा निहितोऽस्य जन्तोः ।

तथाप्युः प्रत्यु चीरापोक्तो ॥

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Absolute Idealism which he has formulated affords a close parallel to the Vedanta. I have often felt that Prof. J. S. Haldane's 'The Sciences and Philosophy' may be taken to be a very able and well-reasoned confirmation of the Vedantic stand-point and deserves more than a passing notice. It requires a separate treatment, so I do not deal with it any further here. I shall instead refer to another outstanding Christian thinker, Bishop D'Arcy, who reproduces in a work the argument of the Vedantic Koshas in an admirable way. The Bishop appeared to me to establish the being of God by a method which I have elsewhere characterised as the method of concretion. This may briefly be elucidated as follows: The sciences can be arranged according to the principle of concretion. Mathematics is the most abstract of the sciences; in it we are merely concerned with a group of abstract ideas. When we pass on to physics, we find it is more concrete than the science of mathematics. Here we are not simply concerned with mere quantity but require the further categories of matter and motion. But the world of physics is still inert and dead; it is devoid of colour, taste or smell. When we pass on to chemistry, we find it to be more concrete than that of physics. Here over and above the categories of matter and motion, we require the concepts of composition and decomposition. We find the world of chemistry to be full of colour, taste and smell. But it is dead and inert. When from chemistry we pass on to biology, we are face to face with a living world. Therefore the world of biology is more concrete than the

world of physics and chemistry. But this world of biology though alive is unconscious. When we pass on from this science to psychology, the world again gains in concreteness; it is not simply alive but conscious. It is a theatre of the play and interplay of conscious subjects. This world corresponds to Manomaya Kosha—but a stage higher up we find the world of Vijnanamaya Kosha which is studied by the philosophic group of sciences. In this world we get the stirrings of the Spirit, i.e., the self-conscious subject which is more than bare mind. Though the Bishop does not refer to the Anandamaya Kosha, it appears plain that the gist of the argument is that as we leave behind one abstract science after another, we get a fuller and fuller vision of the reality of the universe; ultimately it appears to be the expression of the Absolute Spirit or God. This argument may well be called the argument from the principle of concretion, and it is evident that this is an attempt at application, though unconscious, of the Vedantic doctrine of the Koshas for the elucidation of the truth of the universe.

III.

This paper will be incomplete if a reference to the great modern idealistic systems of the West is altogether left out. These bear the unmistakable impress of the great German thinkers, Fichte, Kant and Hegel. Schopenhauer is an illustrious follower of Kant and paid a great compliment to the Upanishads with which he came into contact through a Latin translation of a Persian rendering of those sacred books. Deussen was moved by his great master to have a profound appreciation of Indian thought. "Here we have to do with the Upan-

shads," says Deussen "and the world-wide historical significance of these documents cannot, in our judgment, be more clearly indicated than by showing how the deep fundamental conception of Plato and Kant was precisely that which already formed the basis of Upanishad teaching." Yes, Plato and Kant—these two sum up the idealistic thought of the West. To study the correspondence between the Vedantic thought and the idealistic systems of the West will be the pre-occupation of generations of students yet unborn.

I shall, however, just refer to a ripple of this ocean of study before I close. It has not been widely recognised that the neo-Vedantism of the great Swami Vivekananda affords a striking parallel to the Idealism of the Italian thinker Gentile. Over and above contemplation, the Swamiji puts a wholesome emphasis on action. The neo-Idealism of Italy differentiates itself from the Hegelian and neo-Hegelian systems by its emphasis not so much on thought as on activity. Gentile's great work on 'Mind as a

Pure Act' comes quite close to the teachings of our Swamiji. The subject, according to Gentile, creates its own object by a pure act—the world of experience then is an expression of the activity of spirits. All the individual spirits that apparently seem to be separate and distinct are but the different manifestations of the one Transcendental Self, who evolves the diverse spirits with their worlds by one undivided act. This is quite congenial to the spirit of Advaita Vedanta. We do not know the theology of Gentile yet. His activistic Idealism is apparently non-theistic, but not necessarily non-spiritual; since activity is the highest expression of spirit that we know of. This is also the special contribution of Swami Vivekananda to Advaita Vedanta. Over and above the pure thought of the classical Vedantists, Swamiji puts an emphasis on activity—not the mere epistemological activity postulated by the Italian thinker—but ethical activity or Nishkamakarma, and this elevates the neo-Vedantism of Vivekananda to a higher plane.

SPIRITUAL BASIS OF INTERNATIONALISM

By Swami Avyaktananda

[Swami Avyaktananda is a monk of the Ramakrishna Order, and is the Founder and Minister of the Vedanta Society of London. Besides being proficient in religion and philosophy, he is also a keen student of social sciences. In the following article, which is a summary of a lecture delivered by him under the auspices of the Friends of India Society, London, the Swami shows how Vedanta is the rationale of the social philosophy advocated by humanism and internationalism.]

THE spirit of internationalism which is growing now in Europe is a result of modern science and humanism. It is not based upon Christianity or any other religion. Christianity is undoubtedly a great force, but unfortunately its implica-

tions are not yet fully realised by the Western nations. It was Tolstoy who fully grasped some of the deeper implications of Christianity and formulated a scheme of life, broadbased upon Christian principles. But his idealism has not been proper-

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ly appreciated in any country. He preached an internationalism solely based on Christian idealism. But the current conception of internationalism has no direct connection with any spiritual idealism.

ECONOMIC NATIONALISM

Science has knit together all races of mankind. Railway, steamship, aeroplane, radio, etc. have become the mediums for rapid interchange of ideas, manners and customs. It is amazing to find how universal standards, as regards morality, customs and manners are in a process of growth. No nation is now able to live in a water-tight compartment. The logic of history is compelling every nation to come out and compare notes with other nations. We are painfully conscious that modern political and economic nationalism is not allowing this universalising process to reach its culmination. But modern politico-economic problems, especially the economic depression, show that no national problem can be handled, far less solved, if only the case of a particular nation is taken into consideration. Public finance, credit system and export-import trade of one country have become inseparably connected with those of other countries. This economic internationalism has a direct bearing upon the political life of every nation. Politics and economics are now intertwined. If the economic self-determination of one country is now impossible without the due consideration of that of another country, how can the political self-determination of one country be possible without the due consideration of that of another country? But the emergence of this politico-economic internationalism is mainly due to the

exigencies of circumstances. The idealism that would make this internationalism a living reality is still in the minds of small groups and has not yet come to the forefront of the politico-economic life of mankind.

STOICISM AND HUMANISM

The thinkers of the West have evolved a constructive idealism which, though not essentially spiritual in character, has the potency to make human life happier than it is to-day. This idealism is able to give modern internationalism a definite form; but it must discover its rationale before it can function properly in human life. It preaches humanisation of life which means that every individual, irrespective of colour or creed, must be elevated to the highest stature of physical, intellectual, moral and aesthetic development. This humanism has a long and brilliant history. It has been interpreted from the legal, political, economic and social standpoints in the course of the historical evolution of Europe. The philosophic basis of this humanism was given by stoicism.

The *Jus Naturale* of stoicism says that there is Reason or Law immanent in men and things, and that the correct outlook on men and things is to be formed in the light of this Immanent Reason. It is this Immanent Reason which can alone give us the right conception of equity and justice. We know how stoicism revolutionised Roman Jurisprudence and *Jus Naturale* became transformed into *Jus Gentium*, the primary basis of international law in the West. This *Jus Naturale* was given a fresh interpretation by Rousseau who preached the gospel of the abstract man free from all conventions. Thus, behind the ideas of liberty, equality and frater-

nity of the French Revolution is found the stoicism of ancient Greece. But in France these ideas played their roles mainly in the political sphere. The social and the economic issues were not so explicit during the French Revolution. The economic interpretation of humanism was given by Marx who preached an economic internationalism based upon his dialectical materialism. The social interpretation came from Comte who denied God and installed humanity in His place.

EUROPEAN CIVILISATION

It seems that the European civilisation, which is primarily Greco-Roman in character, has been seeking an internationalism based on stoicism. The Christian idealism has given only an indirect contribution to the growth and development of modern European civilisation. Throughout the Middle Ages, Christianity had been undoubtedly a vital force, and there had been some thinkers who conceived of an internationalism on the basis of the Catholic Church. But after the Middle Ages a new phase of the Greco-Roman civilisation slowly came into being. We find four landmarks in this new phase of modern European civilisation : (1) the Renaissance, (2) the French Revolution, (3) the Revolution of 1848 and (4) the Russian Revolution of 1917. The Renaissance gave a humanistic outlook on life and preached the civil liberty of the people. The French Revolution stood for equal rights for all. The Revolution of 1848 spread the idealism of the French Revolution far and wide. The idealism of the French Revolution has been universalised by the Russian Revolution, and what was implied in the French Revolution has

become explicit. We are not concerned here with the revolutionary method, followed in Russia, but the pure form of idealism behind the Soviet system. The conception of the classless society for which Russia is striving, is based on pure humanism. All forward movements of the modern world show how humanism is trying to form an international outlook, and seeking to bestow equal rights and privileges upon all, irrespective of colour or creed.

SELF-DETERMINATION

Internationalism is a myth without "collective security," and "collective security" has to be ensured within every nation as well as outside it. Without self-determining nations as units, no international life can be built up. Internationalism, as preached by the purest humanism, demands the freedom of every nation; that is to say, a group of people having a common fate, fashioned by the historical and cultural forces, must be free to choose its own way of self-expression. This is the meaning of "collective security," so far as the international life of modern mankind is concerned. Secondly, there must be "collective security" within every nation. That is to say, no social, economic or political policy should be initiated for any sectional interest. Everything within a nation must be planned. But planned society, planned polity or planned economy is impossible unless and until the vested interests have been done away with. As true internationalism presupposes self-determining nations as units, so true nationalism implies self-determining individuals as units. It is impossible to have genuine internationalism or genuine nationalism

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unless and until all spiritual, intellectual and material resources have been thrown open to all. But why should we have such humanistic idealism at all, and how can it be expressed in modern human life in the path of least resistance?

THE VEDANTA

Here we come to the rationale of internationalism and humanism. It is a metaphysical problem, and metaphysics has a very bad name in these days. Why should we be at all humanistic? Why should we give up self-aggrandisement and seek the welfare of humanity at large? Why is the ideal of human solidarity inspiring the best minds of the world? What is the *raison d'être* of this humanism? The Vedanta philosophy of India gives a positive answer to all these questions. The answer is also found in Christianity but it is not generally recognised in the West. The answer of the Vedanta is that one Reality has become manifold, and that every individual is at one with that Reality. This openness can be felt by the refined intellect, another name of which is intuition. Sometimes this sense of spiritual oneness comes to us unconsciously, without any deliberate attempt, when our mind becomes purer and purer. Every philosopher or thinker who preached humanism or internationalism had some glimpse of this spiritual oneness though he might not have taken it to be spiritual. The vague experience of the Reality gave him the urge to conceive of an equitable society and to strive for its realisation. The conception of the spiritual oneness of mankind is implied in stoicism, in Rousseau, Marx and Comte. But it is not explicit. The implication of

Christianity has to be re-discovered in the light of Neo-platonism and Vedanta. The clearest interpretation of the Reality, at once transcendent and immanent, static and dynamic, is found in Vedanta. In India this ideal oneness was mainly applied in the spiritual plane. But the awakened India aims at working out this ideal in actual life and for evolving a new social order on the basis of internationalism. In the West the vague conception of this oneness has developed wonderful systems of thought and brought about revolutionary changes in the politico-socio-economic life of Europe.

EAST AND WEST

For the legitimate fulfilment of modern internationalism there must be a happy blending of Eastern spirituality and Western humanism. The clear conception will show us the right way of achievement. There are two ways open to modern humanity, the revolutionary way, and the evolutionary way. We give up the revolutionary way because it denies the sanctity and divinity of man, which should form the real basis of internationalism. Every kind of violence has a tremendous reaction upon society which resorts to it, though there may be apparent success in the attempt. The way open to the saner sections of mankind is the evolutionary way. It has to be followed with courage of conviction and the clearest conception of the world-order we want to evolve. While an internationally minded individual should be bold enough to call a spade a spade, he should make up his mind to bring about root and branch reform in the world, not through any coercion but through spiritual persuasion and self-

suffering. When the spiritual oneness of mankind becomes a reality in one's mind, and the divinity of all a living creed, there cannot be any other logical way of self-expression for evolving a better social order for mankind.

The fate of modern civilisation depends on a powerful spiritually minded minority. It is not number that counts in the long run. It is a happy sign that in almost all countries there have been sincere groups, feeling the thrill of universal humanity in them. They are going to create the conscience of the future. Though insignificant in number they will gather strength day by day in spite of the kaleidoscopic changes in

the politico-socio-economic life of modern mankind. Strengthening and co-ordinating such groups along spiritual lines should be our very first attempt. The political situation of the world has left no other alternative now. Let these groups realise fully that collective humanity is the face of God, that there is divinity in every man and that every individual has the right to raise himself to the acme of spiritual, moral, intellectual and physical development. Every existing social system is against any spiritual consummation. But the way of root-and-branch reform has to be prepared by creating a strong public opinion on spiritual lines. Only spiritual men can now give humanity a lead. So let us "Be and make!"

SAINT RAMDAS

By D. V. Athalye

(Mr. D. V. Athalye is a noted writer of Western India, and his two volumes on Swami Vivekananda enjoy a wide popularity. His present writing on the famous Maharashtra saint, Ramdas, the Guru of Sivaji, brings into prominence an ideal character in whom profound spirituality and worldly efficiency found a harmonious meeting ground. A saint of this type will no doubt have a great appeal to the modern mind.)

Saint Ramdas (1608-1681) has fittingly been called the Vivekananda of modern Maharashtra. Like the Swami, he devoted his life to make Hinduism broadbottomed and Hindu society aggressive. Like the Swami, he devoted his life to the organisation of a propagandist institution. Like the Swami, he freely mixed with the secular leaders of his time. It was the good fortune of saint Ramdas (as well as of Swami Vivekananda) to have lived and accomplished his life's work at a time when in the land of his birth, love of religion and love of the country were mutually though imperceptibly influencing each other. His romantic life, militant personali-

ty and vitalising message deserve to be studied by all.

He was born in 1608. His boyhood was spent in pleasant and happy surroundings, and there was nothing in those surroundings to embitter his mind or cast a shadow of melancholy over it. But being a man born with a mission, his spiritual consciousness was awakened quite early, and he loved to steal away from the company of his mother and elder brother to a neighbouring grove and there spend hours in day-dreams. What they were, none knew and none knows. But they were not dreams that were reconcilable to a humdrum family life. His determination to

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lead a celibate life brought him into conflict with his family. His mother was equally determined to tie him down to the world and worldly life and knowing Narayan's (that was his early name) thoughts on the subject, sought to effect her purpose by resort to stratagem. One day when Narayan was in a specially loving mood, she asked him whether he would not obey his mother. "What a question!" said the unsuspecting boy-saint, "Mother dear, I would do anything for you." His mother said, "My boy, I know how dutiful and loving you are. Call it my request or my command, but pray don't say 'no' to anything I say and do until the priests utter the words 'Savadhana' in your marriage." Narayan kept quiet but he kept his counsel too, and as soon as the priests had uttered the words 'Savadhana' at the end of the first benedictory verse on the occasion of the marriage ceremony, he left his bride ere yet she was his wedded wife and fled away to practise austere Tapasya. Never since the days of Buddha, has the Goddess of renunciation chosen so poetic a moment for the deliverance of the devotee.

Narayan's parents, grand parents and great grandpaer's were all worshippers of Sri Rama, the ideal king, son, husband and warrior, and Narayan too continued the family tradition. That accounts for his second name 'Ramdas'—the servant of Rama. The great saint Tukaram has referred to Ramdas as the Avatar of Hanuman, the devoted servent and Bhakta of Sri Rama. It was there-

left his home, he should have repaired to Panchavati (Naik) hallowed by the memoriam of Sri Rama for practising penance.

For twelve long years Ramdas practised penance at Panchavati. Before sunrise he would bathe in the holy waters of the Godavari and from that time till noon, he would stand in waist-deep water chanting the sacred names of God. The afternoons and evenings were spent in meditation, reading and prayer. It seems as if he had no struggles, no difficulties. He was equal to any kind of Tapasya. At the close of these years of spiritual discipline, he was blest with the vision of Sri Rama himself and His mandate for the uplift of the people.

Before Ramdas settled down to his life's work, he moved all over India for twelve years. He visited places of pilgrimage and worship. He met saints and prophets. He heard and saw all that was worth hearing and seeing. What he heard and saw, deepened his conviction that unless a fresh effort was made on a new plan to arrest the growth of the denationalising and despiritualising tendencies, the future was dark indeed for all true lovers of Hinduism.

Both Ramdas and Shivaji started their life's work in about 1645. Shivaji's object in seeking to establish an independent kingdom was not merely to protect his ancestral Jahlajir, but also to secure the land of his birth against religious encroachments on the part of the Mahomedan conquerors. Ramdas, from his own point of view too, saw this danger to Hinduism and gave thirty-six years of his life to the awakening of Hindus, the regeneration of Maharashtra, and the formation of an organisation which would continue to keep the flag flowing from generation to generation.

Even before Ramdas was born, Maharashtra had a kind of elastic

religious organisation. The headquarters of the devotional, pious, god-fearing people belonging to this organisation is Pandharpur with its temple of Vithoba (alias Krishna) where twice every year they flock in thousands. Quite a beautiful and inspiring mythology has grown round God Vithoba and his devotees, and the prestige of the names of Jnaneswar, Ekanath or Tukaram is one that is not to be despised. Yet Ramdas saw the need of starting quite a new organisation whose discipline in his days must have been more rigorous, whose outlook in his times must have been more nationalistic and suited for its followers to work hand in hand with contemporary national leaders.

In the enunciation of the ideal Ramdas never wavered. His views on almost all the salient points of philosophy and religion were identical with those of saints like Ekanath or Tukaram. He had accepted the traditional spirit of pessimism as the right basis for Vairagya (renunciation). Where however he differed from most of the Maratha saints was that he was prepared to accept any number of intermediate ideals for the average man. He did not exalt the ideal of ideals at the expense of lesser but (to the average man) more necessary ideals. Honour, fame, social respect or position were ideals which not only met with his approval but applause also. His great ambition seems to be to draw men out of that inglorious rut of inertia, apathy, want of ambition, which discourages and discounts all honest effort. 'Take up some ideal, however small and modest, but concentrate all your energies on its consummation,'—this seems to be his message to the average man. He did

not shun the average man and woman. On the contrary, his one aim was to raise the average moral height of people and inspire them to the performance of great deeds.

Emerson has dilated on the difficulties which a highly sensitive and a highly spiritual man meets with in his journey in the world. The greater the moral and spiritual height of a person, the greater the number of difficulties in his way. To live successfully in the world, a man must be something of the world and his moral height itself is a great handicap to him in dealing with those crooks and sharks who are but too many in this world. Saint Ramdas showed great skill and self-confidence in dealing with the world. He was of opinion that the wicked man must find something in the saint of which he would stand in mortal dread. The religious man, who has made the uplifting of the world his business, must know how to deal with persons of all types and must always triumph over those with whom he has to enter in contest. This he can do if he is true to his ideals, if he towers over the world in the number of great and heroic qualities, and if he has mastered the art of how to behave with people. It is exactly of this art that most religious men are neglectful, and the consequence of this neglect is that in their tussle with the world, they come off second-best. Saint Ramdas in his Dasbodha has repeatedly laid emphasis on this point: He has devoted several chapters to the description of what this Chaturya (tact and cleverness) is like. "Do not be one-sided," he says, "probe deep into the hearts of others. Study the working of other people's minds. Identify yourself with the thoughts and feelings of

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other persons. Understand the hearts of others before you seek to win them. Deal differently with different kinds of people. Above all never forget to give men what they want. If you anticipate other people's wishes, if you serve them heart and soul, they will stand by you through thick and thin." Rarely, if ever, do we come across a saint with such a practical cast of mind. Both by precept and example Saint Ramdas has shown us that idealism and worldly wisdom are not necessarily irreconcilable.

Though a romantic lover of nature and open spaces, Saint Ramdas lived in and for society. Though a lover of solitude, he allowed himself to be surrounded by people, whose uplift was the cherished ambition of his life. Though he had the very spirit of freedom in him, he chained himself down to an organisation which accomplished great deeds during his life-time. He was a master organiser. He had not only the magnetism of genius and personality which attracts and binds together men, but also that spirit of discipline and love of details which are of paramount need in training men. The way he dealt with people was wonderful. Had he not been a saint, he would have become a great politician. There are those who regard him as a politician disguised as a religious man.

It was inevitable that Ramdas with his national outlook and Shivaji with his religious fervour should meet. When exactly they met has not been fixed by historical research. Some say that they first met in 1649, others hold that they could not have met earlier than 1672. Tradition tells us that Shivaji had approached Saint Tukaram for religious guidance and that Tukaram suggested that Ramdas

was the fittest man to guide him. It is believed that Ramdas introduced himself to the great king by means of a letter and mildly chided him for having neglected to come to him in the midst of his military preoccupations. Ramdas was a veritable lion tamer, and the great king of whom even Emperor Aurangazeb stood in mortal dread was as meek and submissive as a lamb before him. Once Ramdas went to beg alms of Shivaji. Shivaji made a Sanad (gift) of his kingdom and delivered it to the saint. "What shall we do with this?" said Ramdas, "keep, O king, the kingdom for yourself and as a token of our overlordship change the colour of your flag and make it Bhagwa (Gerua)." Since then the colour of the Maratha flag has always been Bhagwa, which is our favourite monastic colour.

Ramdas was essentially a patriot-saint. He hailed with joy the tide of national fortune that swept over Maharashtra especially during the latter part of Shivaji's career. In words of perfervid patriotism and with heart swelling with pride he has described how the accession of freedom brought peace and plenty to Ananda-vana-bhuvana (The garden of Joy) i.e. to Maharashtra, and how all the machinations of Aurangazeb failed. Though the last year of his life (1681) must have brought clouds of anxiety to his mind owing to the misrule of Sambhaji, yet on the whole his life witnessed the successful establishment of self-government under the capable leadership of Shivaji. The optimistic tone that we find in all his writings is in no small measure due to this circumstance. His message deserves to be studied by those who seek to utilise the latent spiritual energy of our race to the material well-being and advancement of society.



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By Dewan Bahadur K. S. RamaSwami Sastry, B.A., B.L.

(Dewan Bahadur RamaSwami Sastry, retired District and Sessions Judge, is a noted writer and speaker on religion and philosophy. In the following paragraphs he pleads for a re-vivification of Indian metaphysics by contact with modern thought, but at the same time warns that it should not thereby abandon its allegiance to the great ideal of God-realisation which has always been the goal of metaphysics in India.)

IT is often said that philosophy is "innocent but useless trifling, hair-splitting distinctions and controversies on matters concerning which knowledge is impossible." But metaphysics is not a mere effort of fancy unrelated to life. It is not a Utopian construction or a squaring of the circle but is profoundly valuable to life. Every man must continually add to his experience of life and must constantly or at least now and then try to verify his experience and arrive at his own estimate of the meaning and value of life in the light of the Reality which underlies and transcends appearance. No one can avoid thinking about the how and the why and the wherefore of life; about where he has come from and what he is and where he goes; and about his relation to the Universe and the Cause and Source of all. Art and science have each its own relative values. But it is in metaphysics that we meet the inter-relations of values and the trans-valuation of values. In it alone we attain a union of the self and non-self and have a realisation of the true infiniteness of the seemingly finite self and the seemingly finite non-self in Infinite transcendental Reality.

Ethics, logic, psychology, etc., deal with specific problems relating to conduct, ratiocination, and the nature of mind. But it is in metaphysics that we find an interpretation of

the totality of mind and matter and the significance of Time, Space, Matter and Causality, and the reality of Being or the thing-in-itself as an entity beyond the manifoldness of mind and matter. It deals with the reality of Being and the being of Reality. Mind and matter are within us and about us. Mind has no extension and matter has no consciousness. But the spirit of man reaches out towards something beyond mind and matter and feels at home in a realisation of the Infinite, to use an expressive phrase of Rabindranath Tagore. Physics relates to the empirical standpoint dealing with things as reflected in the mind. But metaphysics aims at finding out things as they are from the transcendental standpoint. But the transcendental point of view is as much a reality of experience as the empirical point of view.

The various solutions given by metaphysics in regard to the riddle of the world have been classified and docketed under the names—Pluralism, Dualism, Qualified Dualism, Monism, Pantheism, Theism, Agnosticism, Naturalism, Scepticism, Materialism, Subjective Idealism, Sensationalism, Nihilism, etc. It is not necessary to weigh in the scale pan of the mind which solution is nearest to the truth. Nor is it possible to do so. As Mr. A. K. Rogers says, "No philosophical theory that has been

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or is likely to be propounded is, we may venture to say, self-evident, or fitted to carry conviction at once to every mind." Each man must harmonise and verify the totality of his experiences so that he may realise the meaning and value of existence. It must also be possible to arrive at a standpoint wherein all valid verifications of experience in the past and in the present will be in harmony, as Reality is not and cannot be self-contradictory. As Dr. Deussen says well: "The nature of things,—as it reveals itself to the searching eye, immeasurable around, and unfathomable within us,—is one and at harmony with itself. Therefore truth also, as the reflection of that which is in the mirror of the human mind, must be for all times and countries one and the same, and whatever the great teachers of mankind in ancient and modern times have gathered from the immediate contemplation of nature and revealed in the form either of religion or philosophy, that must (apart from errors, which as a rule touch only what is specific and incidental) be essentially concordant, however varied may be the outward hues and forms it has received from the civilisations and traditions of different ages."

The future of Indian metaphysics is a most fascinating subject. We cannot afford to shut ourselves in a metaphysical cocoon oblivious of the march of metaphysical ideas elsewhere in the world. Such a method will end only in shutting out God's light and air, and result in effeteless and decay and death of our metaphysical intellect. While we must certainly preserve our heritage and perfect it and maintain our place as the leader of the metaphysical

thought of the world, we must be attentive to the evolution of values in metaphysics elsewhere in the world. A metaphysics which does not watch the growth ideas and ideals all over the world and which does not criticise them in its own light will soon go to the scrapheap. Already infinite harm has been done by each school of philosophic and religious thought in India making a mystery of itself and communicating it only to its own adherents. Each school is rejoicing over its empty victories over absent foes. Its thunders and curses, calling down Heaven's wrath on rival schools with a ferocity that makes itself ridiculous by its inanity, have led to our metaphysical degradation.

We have therefore to study with care the course of thought elsewhere in the world. This should be done not for the purpose of starting a campaign of universal refutation but for the purpose of knowing the course of universal thought and intensifying our own metaphysical self-consciousness. As Richard Falckenberg says: "Metaphysical principles are less easily verified from experience than physical hypothesis, but also less easily refuted. Systems of philosophy, therefore, are not so dependent on our progressive knowledge of facts as the theories of natural science, and change less quickly; notwithstanding their mutual conflicts, and in spite of the talk about discarded standpoints, they possess in a measure the permanence of classical works of art, *they retain for all time a certain relative validity.*" This is the right and humble spirit in which the work must be done, because metaphysicians of all times and climes have a nasty habit

of assuming omniscience. They

" Assume the god,
Affect to nod
And seem to shake the
spheres."

The weight of the world-riddle is not lighter to-day than it was till now, and the Goddess of Truth has veils yet unremoved. Let us study in this spirit the heroes of ancient and modern philosophy in the East and the West—Plato and Aristotle, the Christian philosophers and mystics, the Islamite philosophers and mystics, Descartes, Spinoza, Bacon and Hobbes and Locke and Berkeley and Hume and the Scottish School, Leibniz and Kant and Fichte and Schelling and Hegel and Schopenhauer and Lotze, Comte, Mill and Spencer and Green and Bradley and Bosanquet, Bergson, James and Croce.

To the Greek thinkers the universe was a harmonious work of art calling forth awe and admiration. They humanised Nature and God. Plato and Aristotle called philosophy the child of wonder. Christian thought divinised man and nature. Modern thought has been aiming at seeing Truth as it is, free from intrusive and obtrusive humanisation and divinisation. It is bold, iconoclastic, naturalistic, even agnostic. When Bacon vindicated induction and the Renaissance substituted the classical literature for Christian theology, a new spirit entered the West. Erdmann said well, "Modern philosophy is Protestantism in the sphere of the thinking spirit." Philosophy has in modern times refused to be the handmaid of theology. Nay, like Henry V, it has taken the crown from the head of religion and seeks to wear it impudently and before its time and fitness. Modern philosophy has been undoubtedly influ-

enced deeply by the new forces of nationalism and democracy and science. It does not seek to fly away from life but yearns to be a vital factor in general culture and to influence life.

The great problems of modern metaphysics in the West must be studied by Indian metaphysicians so that India might assimilate whatever is worth attention therein for the purpose of intensifying and sublimating her own wonderful metaphysical consciousness. Modern philosophers in the West do not speak with a single voice. Neo-realism, neo-idealism, positivism, pragmatism creative evolution, and other catchwords are the battle-cries of the present era. Einstein's theory of relativity has introduced new elements of complication and has been related to philosophy by the late Lord Haldane. The philosophising of modern science has been carried on with brilliant power by Bertrand Russell, A. S. Eddington and A. R. Whitehead. But the West is yet to know that science is not the entirety of truth and that physical nature is not the entirety of being.

While studying the systems of thought elsewhere in the world and especially the modern reconstructions of experience, Indian Metaphysics has to keep unimpaired its high idealistic and transcendental note. The mechanical theory of the universe has neither truth nor joy in it. No mechanism has self-awareness or knows its own beauty or work before or after. The soul is real and the universe is God's handiwork and full of His being. The materialistic outlook magnifies the body ; its aesthetic outlook is flat and earthly and low; its ethics are grovelling and mean;

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its psychology either denies the spirit of man or binds it by iron chains to the earth; and it has no faith in the reality and glory of God or His creation and governance of the world or the freedom and immortality and bliss of the soul. It is, in short, an affirmation of egoism. But real bliss is in the transcendence of egoism—be it in sleep or in the contemplation of beauty in nature, in human forms, in art or in the realisation of God. In artistic joy the deliverance from egoism is partial and temporary but in God-realisation the deliverance from egoism is full and eternal. India has always unwaveringly affirmed the highest truths of metaphysics. She must be loyal to such affirmation not only for her welfare but also for the welfare of the world. Hence she must preserve and perfect her spiritual vision without becoming at the same time a

mere dreary introvert. Only then she can save the world from its sordidness and sorrows. In fact the West has to turn to her for the deliverance of her soul from the fetters of mechanism and materialism and empiricism and nihilism. Dr. Deussen says: "In India the influence of this perverted and perverse spirit of our age has not yet overthrown in religion and philosophy, the good traditions of the great ancient time." How can India fit herself to perfect her metaphysics and lead the world aright unto God? She has always been loyal to Veda (Scripture) and Deva (God) and she must intensify her loyalty and pray for Grace. The glory of Veda and Deva is in the Bhagavad Gita. India must walk in the light of the Gita—because the highest metaphysics is the Gita and the Gita is the highest metaphysics.

SWETASWATARA UPANISHAD

By Swami Thyagisananda

स्वरेहमर्णि छत्रा प्रणवं चोत्तरपिण् ।
आननिर्मयनाभ्यासादेवं पश्येत्पूरुषत् ॥

स्वरेह - one's own body अर्णि - the under wood प्रणवं = the symbol
 Om उत्तरपिणि - the upper wood च - and छत्रा = making आननिर्मयनाभ्यासात्
 - by practising churning in the form of meditation देवं - God
 पश्येत् - one should see निरुषत् - like something hidden.

Making one's own body the lower piece of wood and the Pranava the upper piece of wood and practising churning in the form of meditation, one should realise God as one would find out something hidden. (14)

*Note.—*This verse describes the process of meditation with the help of Pranava-japa as the best method to find out God in one's own self. Elsewhere, we find the Guru and Shishya (disciple) compared to the two pieces of wood and the process of learning to churning.

तिष्ठेतु तैले दधिनीवसपि रापः स्रोतःस्वरणीषु चातिनः ।
एतमाह्या ॥५८॥ अत्मनि पूर्णतेऽसौ सत्येनेन सप्तसा योऽनुपश्यति ॥
सर्वव्यापिनमात्मानं क्षीरं सर्वरिवार्पितम् ।
आत्मविद्यातपोमूलं तदनन्दोपनिषत्परम् ॥

तिष्ठेतु—In sesame seeds तैले—oil दधिनि—in curds सर्पि:=butter स्रोतःषु—in (underground) springs आपः=water अरणीषु=in pieces of wood अभिः=fire च—and इति—just as एव—*in like manner* असौ—this आत्मा=the self आत्मनि—in oneself एतते—is perceived यः=who एव—*this अव्यापितम्—all pervading क्षीरे—*in milk अर्पितं—*which is contained सर्पि—butter इति—like आत्मविद्यातपोमूलं—rooted in self-knowledge and concentration आत्मानं—*the self सत्येन=by truth तप्तसा=by concentration अनुपश्यति=perceives again and again तत्—*that परं—supreme ब्रह्म—Brahman उपनिषद्—*the destroyer of ignorance.

As oil in sesame seeds, as butter in curds, as water in underground springs, as fire in wood, even so this Self is perceived in the self¹. He², who³ by means of truthfulness and meditation⁴ perceives again and again⁴ this Self which is all-pervading like the butter contained in milk and which is rooted in self-knowledge and meditation, is that⁵ supreme Brahman, the destroyer of ignorance⁶. (15&16)

Note.—The two verses have to be taken together, as the last line of the first verse has to be read along with the second verse for proper construction. The first three lines show how the Self is perceived in oneself and not in anything else and how it forms the essence of everything. It also emphasises the necessity of self-effort for the realisation of Atman which is already existent.

The four similes are suggestive in their own way. The first suggests that the Atman is present everywhere, though invisible, as no particle of a sesame seed is free from oil. The second suggests how the all-pervading subtle Atman can be realised as having form through Bhakti, a form which is capable of melting away under the scorching rays of Jnana, just as the diffused fat particles in milk assume the form of solid butter in cool atmosphere and melt away into ghee when kept in a hot place or over a fire. The third suggests that however great our trouble may be in reaching this hidden source of bliss, the moment we reach it, it is capable of quenching all our desires and of making us pure, just as a man who digs a well can slake his thirst and bathe himself as soon he reaches the water-level. The suggestiveness of the last is already explained under verse 13.

1. *In the Atman* (आत्मनि)—This here stands for Buddhi.

2. *By means of truthfulness* (सत्येन)—This represents the intellectual struggle to find out the thing-in-itself, the noumenon behind the phenomenon, the truth which exists independently, unaffected by time, space and causation. It denotes Gnana Yoga.

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3. *By means of Tapas* (तप्ति)—This represents the Yogic process of controlling the mind.

4. *Perceives again and again* (अनुपश्यति)—This shows the necessity of constant and repeated practice. Cf. Patanjali's Yoga Sutra I, 13 : स तु दीर्घ-कालमैत्यर्थस्तद्वासेवितः

5. एः तत्—The difference in gender of these two correlatives of the text is meant to signify that all differences of sex exist only in the dominion of Maya and that Brahman and he who realises it transcend sex.

6. *Supreme Brahman* (पूर्ण ब्रह्म) — The knower of the Self becomes Brahman, because the self and Brahman are the same. Cf. ब्रह्मवेदब्रह्मेष्व भवति This is the culmination of repeated practice.

7. *The destroyer of ignorance* (उपनिषत्) :—Ordinarily it means the works known by that name. But according to the root meaning of the word, it means the destroyer of ignorance. So it is appropriate to consider Brahman as the Upanishad par excellence.

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Two Outlooks on Life

Mr. Leslie J. Belton, M.Sc., writing on "Individualism and Self-transcendence" in a recent issue of the *Hibbert Journal*, draws the following pointed contrast between Eastern and Western outlook on life : "The concept of development too is very differently understood in Eastern and Western modes of thought. To the former, development may be described with fair accuracy as signifying the means by which Brahma achieves self-realisation. To the latter, it signifies biological development on the globe, viewed from the human angle. To the Westerner life is good in itself; he believes that in some measure man can assist in its development and direction. Whereas Eastern thought is fixed upon Atman, that which evolves, Western thought is concerned with that which he animates, the world of manifestation. Thus Life assumes value in its own right; not as Maya or as something

to be delivered from or even transcended, but as a realizable good which achieves its fullest expression on earth in self-conscious beings. Inertia is evil, to be overcome. Good is the active conquest of inertia, the flowering of Life in Mind, in finite personalities. And these self-conscious life-centres—microcosmic epitomes of the Supreme Creator—evince a capacity to plan and to direct Life in accordance with some value criteria as they apprehend."

A comparative study of Eastern and Western cultures will show that they have failed in their mission because of an over-emphasis on what have been described above as their differing outlooks on life. In her enthusiasm to spurn life the East has neglected life so effectively as to lose the very power of spurning it and as a consequence its outlook has degenerated into a sneaky type of materialism which wallows in the mud without knowing that it is doing so. The Westerner has forgotten the

Supreme Creator in his emphasis on the self-conscious life-centres which epitomise Him,—a natural consequence of the dictum that life is good in itself. This dictum, when actually applied in life, will defeat its own purpose ; for it necessarily hides from view the major aspect of reality which transcends the visible life, and thus by basing life on an incomplete view tends to make it the very opposite of good. That is the genesis of Western materialism—strong and vigorous but ultimately disastrous in its consequences. To see God within life and beyond it is the true ideal ; to split it into two and try to specialise in one or the other will always end in disaster.

The Greatest Three

H. G. Wells had stated some years ago that the greatest men of the world were in his opinion six in number. In a recent article appearing in the *Tribune* from his pen, the old six have been reduced to three, these being Jesus Christ, Buddha and Aristotle. Christ is, according to him, the greatest among these, and of him he remarks : " He is I think a quite cordial figure in human history and it will be long before Western men decide—if ever they do decide, to abandon his life as the turning point in their reckoning of time.... Now it is interesting and significant that a historian, without any theological bias whatever, should find that he cannot portray the progress of humanity honestly without giving a foremost place to a penniless teacher from Nazareth. The old Roman historians ignored Jesus entirely ; he left no impress on the historical records of his time. Yet more than 1000 years after, a his-

torian like myself, who does not call himself a Christian, finds the picture centring irresistably around the life and character of this most significant man." That he had tremendous personal magnetism and that he spoke with authority would not have in themselves given him the permanent place of power he occupies. " That place is his by virtue of the new and simple and profound ideas which he realised—the profound importance of the individual under the fatherhood of God and the conception of the Kingdom of Heaven ... It is one of the most revolutionary changes of outlook that has ever stirred and changed human thought. No age has even yet understood fully the tremendous challenge it carries to the established institutions and subjugations of mankind. But the world began to be a different world from the day that doctrine was preached, and every step toward wide understanding and tolerance and good will is a step in the direction of that universal brotherhood Christ proclaimed.

" The historian's test of an individual's greatness is, ' What did he leave to grow ? Did he start men thinking along fresh lines with a vigour that persisted after him ? By that test Jesus stands first."

The influence of Jesus on human thought has been very great, and we do not want to minimise it in any way. But we doubt whether the estimate of Mr. Wells is as free from prejudice as he claims it to be. He has, to be sure, no theological prejudice ; but we feel he is not free from that mentality of which Spengler accuses Western historians in general—the obsession that human history is the same as European history. It is no doubt true that as far as Europe is con-

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cerned Christ has exercised a greater influence over its life than any other individual, but when European history is viewed in the true perspective of world-history there may not be wanting others who have been as important to other civilisations as Christ has been to that of Europe.

Buddha and Self-Sacrifice

About Buddha he remarks : "As with Christ so with Buddha, whom I would put very near in importance to Christ, you see clearly a man, simple, devout, lonely, battling for light—a vivid human personality, not a myth. Beneath a mass of miraculous fables, I feel that there also was a man. He too, gave a message to mankind, universal in its character. Many of our best modern ideas are in closest harmony with it. All the miseries and discontent of life are due, he taught, to selfishness. Selfishness takes three forms—one the desire to satisfy the senses, another, the craving for immortality, and the third is the desire for prosperity, worldliness. Before a man can become serene, he must cease to live for his senses or himself. Then he merges into a greater being. Buddha in different language called men to self-forgetfulness five-hundred years before Christ. In some ways he was nearer to us and our needs. He was more lucid upon our individual importance in service than Christ, and less ambiguous upon the question of personal immortality."

Aristotle and Intellectual Synthesis

As Christ and Buddha are important in the history of human will, so is Aristotle in the history of human intelligence. For, "Aristotle began a great new thing in the world—classifying and analysing information. He

was the father of scientific synthesis. There had been thinkers in the world before but he taught men to think together At one time he had a thousand men scattered throughout Asia and Greece, collecting material for his natural history. Political as well as natural science began with him Aristotle's insistence on facts and their rigid analysis, the determination to look truth in the face, was a vast new step in human progress."

Dr. Schweitzer's criticism of the Gita

A reviewer of a recent book in German on Indian thought by Dr. Albert Schweitzer summarises the Doctor's criticism of the Bhagavad Gita gospel of action as follows: "The Bhagavad Gita makes notable concessions to the latter (life-affirmation), concluding that activity is no less justifiable than non-activity. But activity contemplated is not the free activity indicated by the impulse of the heart. It is only activity in connection with the fulfilment of the obligation of caste. Because it fails to reach the idea of active love, the ethic of the Bhagavad Gita is like a smoky fire from which no flame flares upward. Within the world-view of world-and-life-negation, action can only be justified at all as performed in devotion to God. And since the God of the Bhagavad Gita is exalted above good and evil it is forced to regard non-ethical action as something required by God. Dr. Schweitzer's judgment of this famous book is : 'Because it contains such marvellous phrases about inner detachment from the world, about the attitude of mind which knows no hatred and is kind, and about loving self-devotion to God, we



are wont to overlook its non-ethical contents. It is not only the most read but also the most idealised book in world literature."

We take this criticism for consideration, because it is very typical of the criticism made of the Gita in ancient and modern times. The criticism about the ideal of activity inculcated by the Gita loses all force when it is seen that the Gita does not uphold caste, as the critic conceives, but only Varna which is based on the inherent characteristics of men. The activity resulting from these inherent characteristics is called Svadharma, and that is caste-duty or Varna-Dharma contemplated by the Gita as belonging to individuals. The impulse of the heart in its healthy manifestation is therefore certainly accepted by the Bhagavad Gita. The ideal of active love and social duty therefore find a harmonious reconciliation in the Gita, and the figure of the smoky fire becomes quite inappropriate. It was made, and is still being made, a gospel of vigorous action.

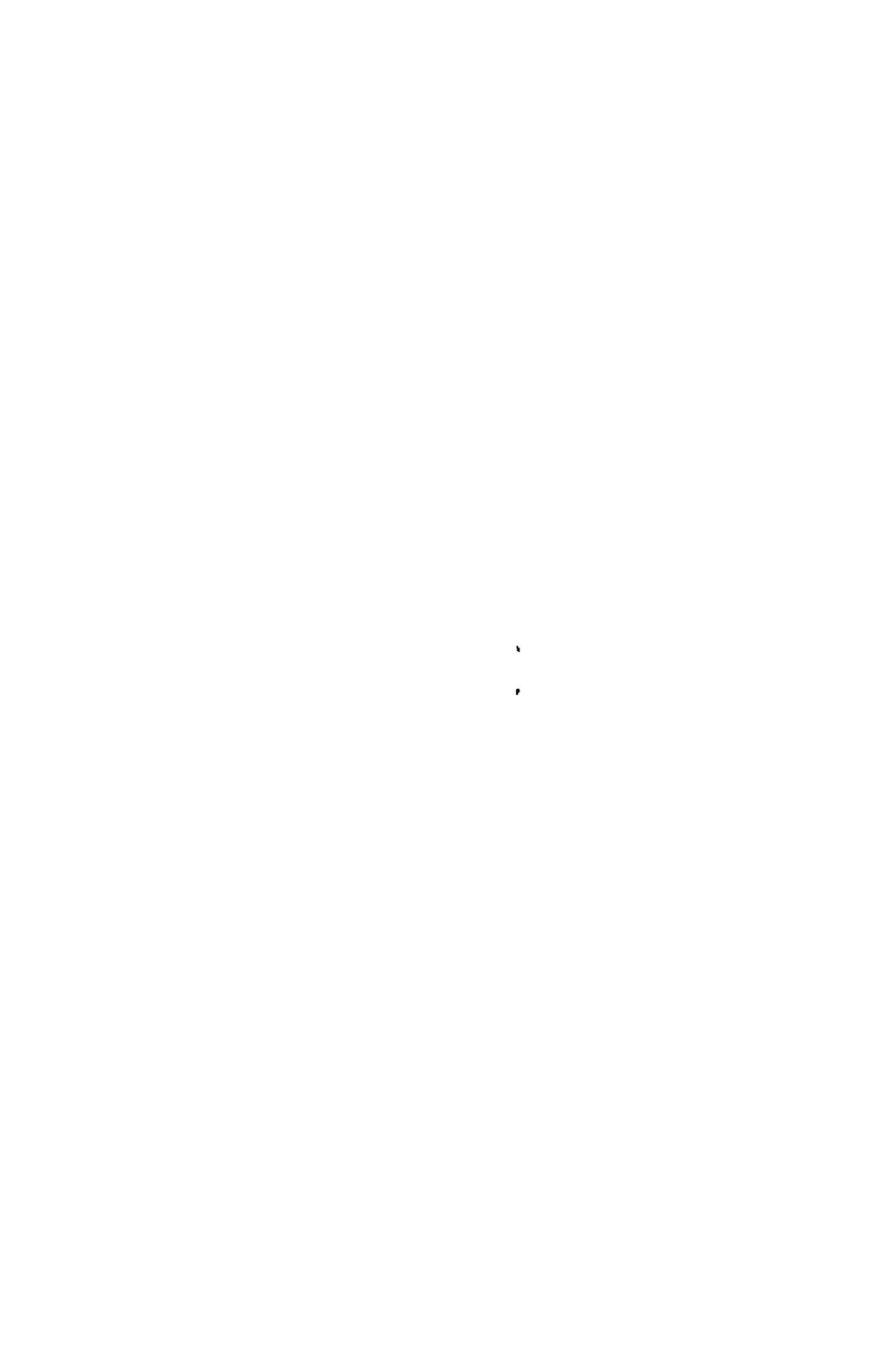
The charge that the teachings of the Gita are non-ethical will not in any way convince a mind that carefully reads the chapter in which the Daivie (the divine and ethical) and the Asuric (the diabolical and non-ethical) natures are described, and man is powerfully exhorted to follow the former and avoid the latter. So when in expounding the highest philosophy of self-surrender, the Gita goes beyond the dualities of good and bad, it must be borne in mind that it is not in the least upsetting the moral order, and that it is addressing its teaching to the morally perfect man with whom morality has become an inward urge and ceased to be an external compulsion.

A Scientist's Protest

In an article entitled "The Racial Question—Theory and Fact," Julian Huxley, the well-known biologist, points out that the racial prejudice which reigns supreme over the world in all countries except Soviet Russia has no biological foundation to stand upon. If it has any justification, it is only a temporary one born of the exigencies of culture-contacts, economic competition and political organisation. Racial purity, he points out, is a myth, and the strong feeling on this point that actuates Europe to-day has done more harm than good.

He remarks : " Notably in Europe both ethnic intercrossing and culture-contacts have proceeded so far that 'racial purity,' like complete isolationism and self-sufficiency, is impossible of attainment. And because they are impossible to attain, they are dangerous to aim at; as an ideal, they contain unrealities and impossibilities which may destroy essential realities and threat true possibilities.

" The violent racialism to be found in Europe to-day is a symptom of Europe's exaggerated nationalism ; it is an attempt to justify nationalism on a non-materialistic basis, to find a firm basis in objective science for ideas, passions and policies which are generated internally by a particular economic and political system, and have real relevance only in reference to that system. The cure for the racial mythology, with its accompanying self-exaltation and persecution of others, which now besets Europe, is a tempering of the nationalist ideal, and in the practical sphere an abandonment of claims by nations to absolute sovereign rights. To drive this lesson home will take time and may even demand a new period of



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war. Meanwhile, however, science and the scientific spirit can do something by pointing out the biological realities of the ethnic situation, and by refusing to lend her sanction to the absurdities and the horrors perpetrated in her name. Racialism is a myth, and a dangerous myth at that. It is a cloak for economic and nationalistic aims that in their uncloaked nakedness would look ugly enough. And it is not scientifically-grounded. The essence of science is the appeal to fact ; and the scientific fact remains."

Leaving aside the question whether the race theory is a fact or fiction, one

point that interests us in the extract given above is the necessity that has arisen for the scientist to defend his subject against the abuses of it by politicians and leaders of society. It has been the custom for the critics of religion, including the scientists, to speak of the horrors and oppressions perpetrated in the name of religion. The religious man, however, attributes all these to perversions of religion at the hands of selfish men who happen to control it in society. That the man of science is also forced to-day to adopt the same line of defence takes the wind out of the sail of scientific criticism directed against religion.

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DISCOURSES ON GNANA YOGA AND OTHER LECTURES : By Swami Vivekananda. Published by Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Almora Dt. (Can be had at Vedanta K. C. Office, Mylapore, Madras). Price As. 10. Pages 98.

The lovers of religious literature all over the English-knowing world will greet with joy and enthusiasm this small book containing some of the brilliant writings and discourses of Swami Vivekananda that have hitherto remained unpublished. The book takes its name from its first chapter of 38 pages entitled "Discourses on Gnana Yoga" which sets forth in simple yet inspiring words the highest truths of Sankara Vedanta and the spiritual practices for the realisation of the same. The remaining 47 pages contain 12 small chapters under the following headings :—Struggle for Expansion, The Birth of Religion, Four Paths of Yoga, Cycle of Rec. and Change, Love of God, India, A Preface to the Imitation of Christ, Christianity in India, Hindus and Christians, Similarity between the Vedanta Philosophy and Christianity, Child Marriage, Epistles. As these headings indicate, these chapters give the views of the Swami on diverse topics, religious, social and cultural. The last chapter containing some of his letters in verse form

gives a fascinating revelation of the witty and playful aspect of the Swami's character. It is needless to mention that as in the case of his major works, these writings of the Swami too are note-worthy for the force, inspirational quality, lucidity, simplicity and profundity, which have gained for his works a place of honour among the religious classics of the world.

THE MAHARSHI AND HIS MESSAGE : By Paul Brunton. The Liberty Press, Madras. Pages 112, Price 9 annas. (For circulation in India only).

This book dealing with the personality and message of Sri Ramana Maharshi is a selection from Mr. Brunton's famous book "A Search in Secret India," which was once reviewed in these columns. Those among the devotees of the Maharshi who cannot afford to purchase the costly work mentioned above, will feel highly indebted to the publishers of this book for bringing out in so cheap and handy a form Mr. Brunton's charming portrayal of the sage. Since both the writer and his theme have evoked keen interest among the public, we need not say anything more about the book here than that it is both fascinating and inspiring. The printing and get-up are excellent.



MATTER, MYTH AND SCIENCE : By Dorothea Chaplin. Published by Simpkin Marshall, Ltd., Stationers' Hall Court, London, E.C. 4. Pages 190. Price 8s net.

This book by Dorothea Chaplin, the scholar-tourist, is meant for travellers who care to penetrate beyond apparent distinctions to the unitary origins of human customs and beliefs. Many hitherto unexplained myths and customs among the Welsh, Irish, Scotch, English, Celts and American Indians, as also among the Mexicans, seem to find an adequate explanation only in the Puranas. This the authoress illustrates by considering a few cults of importance. The Bull-cult, as found in the rock-carvings of Morayshire, Penrith and other places, is traced to the Nandiu of Siva. St. Kentigern, the Protector of the Holy Cow, is strikingly like Gopala. The Knock-We-Gael and Dunadd Boars receive their signification from the third Avatar of Vishnu. Symbols like the lotus and the Swastika originated among the Hindus. The names of many places in the New Continent, viz., Rama, Nila, Narada, Pupil, Canada, and the name of the river Mukara, many reliques of the Mayan civilisation, the very name of Ireland (Arya land), the river Thames (Tamara !), St. Margaret (Marakatha : pearl),—all these according to the authoress must provoke thought in any serious-minded reader. The cross is entirely Hindu in origin. "White Island" by which name the British Isles are known, is a literal translation of Sveti Dwipa ! And this is, in the writer's view, tenable as Bharatavarsha meant Asia and not present Hindusthan only. The beautiful subterranean grotto at Margate on the Isle of Thanet presents to view the Enlightened Buddha and Ganesa. These strengthen the evidence for the theory that there were pre-Christian Hindu settlements in America, Britain, Ireland and other parts

of the world ! And it need not be considered crazy as "many Hindu statements have been ridiculed in the past, which have now become established facts and this may follow the same course." The book is well illustrated with a dozen plates and six illustrations. It also has an index, which makes the book complete. It is a thought-provoking work of interest to tourists of all countries.

SAGE OF SAKORI : By B. V. Narasimha Swami. Pages 177. Price annas 8.

The author of "Self-Realisation" presents here the life of Upasani Baba. Sri-nam Narasimha Swami has been much attracted by the life and personality of this 'Sage of Sakori', in whose Ashrama he spent a good many useful months. Sakori Baba's life, as presented in this book, speaks the growing influence of this person in Maharashtra. The peculiar mysticism of this life may not find credence amongst all who may chance to read this book, but the long period of intense Sadhana Upasani Baba underwent as a disciple of his Moslem Guru, Sai Baba, cannot but strike us with admiration. The Indian is prepared to go through, willingly, any torture of body and mind, and can suffer any denial of the ordinary comforts of life, if he is convinced that the truth he is hankering after would thereby be attained. However great a person may be, one should guard against unwittingly becoming the "depository of other people's beliefs." India should not also, by developing a very sceptical attitude towards mystic experience, and the message of world-reform some mystics adumbrate, lose the experiences of the modern adventurers in the realm of the spirit.

The book can be had at the office of the *Sunday Times*, Loane Square, Broadway, Madras ; or from the Manager, Sri Upasani Baba's Ashrama, Sakori, P.O. Rahata, Dt. Ahmednagar.

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SRI RAMAKRISHNA CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

The long-expected inauguration of the Sri Ramakrishna Birth-Centenary Celebrations took place on 24th February 1936. According to the programme drawn up by the Centenary Celebration Committee at Belur, these celebrations are to be held in India and abroad for the whole year from February 1936 to February 1937. The enthusiasm that was evinced in several big cities of India on this occasion and the information received till now regarding the numerous celebrations held in the smaller cities and towns are sufficient to fill the heart of a lover of Indian culture with joy ; for, does it not show that even in the midst of economic and political pre-occupations India still remains true to her ideal of God-realisation, of which the life of Sri Ramakrishna is the most striking embodiment in recent times ?

CALCUTTA

Of all the great cities in India, it is Calcutta that has evinced the greatest fervour and enthusiasm in the celebration of this great occasion. There is a common saying that a prophet is not honoured in his own land, but in the case of Sri Ramakrishna, however, Bengal has not only given birth to this World-man, but has shown the rest of India and the world at large how to honour and cherish the memory and message of the most out-standing spiritual personality of the age. Every year the birthday of Sri Ramakrishna stirs the city of Calcutta, but this time it has been observed as a holiday and a festive occasion by vast numbers of Hindus in the city. The seven days preliminary celebrations began at Calcutta on the 24th of February, the actual birthday of the Master, which was observed at Belur Math, the head-monastery of the Order, with the worship of all the prophets and incarnations of the world, and the performance of a Homam in a specially constructed altar on the bank of the Ganges, to the accompaniment of Vedic chanting by Brahmins specially sent by the religious institutions of Benares. About 8,000 devotees partook of the sacred offer-

ings that day. In the evening there was a public meeting in the monastery, when several speakers, monk and lay, spoke on the Master and his message. Dr. Kalidas Nag, who was among the speakers, observed by way of reflections on the Master's life and personality : " Hundred years ago Sri Ramakrishna was not known to the world, nor was any temple built for him. On the opposite bank of the Ganges, at Dakshineswar, this superman had manifested his real nature which baffles all description. Then no one imagined that that place would become a pilgrimage hundred years later and that millions of men and women would come to worship him year after year. He lived the life and gave no 'discourse' or lectures nor did he 'preach', but the life he lived has made him famous to-day." The other items of the celebration that day consisted of the broadcasting of the message of the President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, the illumination of the monastery and its precincts, the worship of the Divine Mother all through the night, and the initiation of several novitiates into Brahmacharya and Sannyas.

On the 26th of February there was a largely attended meeting at the Town Hall of Calcutta under the presidency of Maharaja Sir Manmatha Nath Ray Chaudhury of Santosh when many distinguished citizens of Calcutta paid their tribute to the Master.

Mr. Ramananda Chatterjee remarked on this occasion : " Considering that no school, no college, no university, no library contributed to his mental and spiritual equipment and that all that he owed to other human beings for such equipment was due to contact and conversations with some Sannyasins and other religious minded persons and the guidance of a 'Bhairavi' in the earlier stage of his preparation for his life's work, the conclusion becomes irresistible that his spiritual genius was extra-ordinary and marvellous.... What is known as religious tolerance or toleration but would probably be better called mutual appreciation and respect among the followers of different faiths, has been traditional in India for ages That Ramakrishna was such a

harmoniser in spite of his not having read the scriptures of even the principal historical religions in the original or in translation gives him a distinct, a unique place in the long line of teachers of harmony of many a clime and age. India's supreme note has always been spiritual. Keeping that fact in view, one may say that the Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa Centenary is the year's most noteworthy contemporary event in India."

Swami Abhedananda, one of the few direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna yet surviving, paid his tribute to the Master by pointing out that once in every five hundred years divine incarnations have appeared in this world and that five hundred years after Chaitanya "the Lord was born in the form of an illiterate priest" as Sri Ramakrishna. He also referred to the Master's doctrine of the harmony of all religions and specially to his sublime attitude towards women. He remarked : "Another great fact in his life was that he looked upon all women including his wife as the living representatives of the Divine Mother. He did not renounce wife and home like the other great prophets of the past, but living in the world, he was, at the same time the best of Sannyasins. He has once more set woman on the altar of motherhood and had even accepted a woman as his Guru."

The next speaker, Dewan Babadur Ramaswami Madalpur, besides referring to Sri Ramakrishna's message of the harmony of religions, emphasised also the universal significance of his personality. He said : "Though Bengal has every reason to be proud of the fact that the Paramahansa and his foremost disciple Vivekananda were born in Bengal, yet it should not forget that these great souls belong not merely to Bengal, not even to India, but to humanity itself."

The Maharaja of Santosh, the President of the evening, said in his concluding speech that 'Sri Ramakrishna Centenary' is the name given to a great national idea—that of rousing our people from morbid stupor and taking fullest possible advantage of that flood-light which is capable of removing the veil of darkness from the obscurest corners of human knowledge. "Our world-wide movements are meant to remove superstitions of every description and point

towards a great whirlpool of action in which the East is to be epitomised, its total knowledge codified." He said that he had deep reverence, and undiluted and absolute faith in the Saint of Dakshineswar. "It is he," the Maharaja continued, "who like the miracle man of the 20th century, shaped thinkers and organisers, that is, men great in essence and fit to lead in their own sphere of action. It is he who laid the broad foundation of perfect understanding of the universal spirit in a materialistic and nationalistic age which is torn asunder by diversity of races and interests. It is he who preached from the lofty pinnacle of great knowledge that the sweetness and light of the few must be imperfect until the raw and unkindled masses of humanity are touched with sweetness and light I like to draw a portraiture of him before you, as I take him to be surely not as a saint whom mankind will remember as a stern religious leader, disrupter of social organisations, but as a saint full of sprightliness, humour and handsome courtesy ; a saint of kindly countenance and fascinating conversation with the magical power to beguile you into being informed beyond your worth and wise beyond your birth-right.... It is Perfection, absolute in details that was worshipped by Sri Ramakrishna. His nature was dynamic. He was catholic in Spirit, strong in organisation and believed in a religion universal in nature.... As a child of nature, fired with imagination, he was carried on the high wings of fancy and he conceived in vividly fanciful colours of the impossibilities which are still lying beyond the ken to be focused. His spirituality thus became mixed with Realities. His master-pieces, the total growth and universal movement of his soul, are incalculable. The world owes to him more than the world can pay. One hundred years constitute a pretty long span of time and although he shuffled off his mortal coil long, long ago, his spirit still resides with us."

The public celebration came off on the 1st of March. It is usual for huge crowds to gather at the monastery at Belur on the birthday celebrations of Sri Ramakrishna ; but this year the crowd was so great that a section of Calcutta seemed to have been transferred to the monastery grounds. To

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bring in and take away the crowds there were special steamer services and local trains running. The monastery offered no attraction by way of sight-seeing except it be its shrines ; nor had it any arrangements for entertainment except it be devotional music. An attraction much mightier than what this earth offers must surely have been at work to hold together this seething mass of humanity in which all distinctions of caste, colour and creed were submerged and forgotten in a continuous wave of joy and spiritual exaltation. At 4 p.m. when the crowd was thickest, there must have been more than a lakh of people aseem¹ led in the monastery premises. And all through the day about twenty-five thousand people took full meal of offered food (Prasadam), and many more, small quantities of it.

BENARES

Benares, the Holy City of India, evinced an unprecedented enthusiasm in the celebration of Sri Ramakrishna's Birth-Centenary. The celebration which lasted for about a fortnight was noteworthy for three features—the opening of a temple of Sri Ramakrishna, the convention of a religious conference, and the whole-hearted co-operation of the various religious heads and monastic orders of Benares. Previous to the actual birth-day anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna, Rudra Yaga, Vishnu Yaga, Saptasati Homa and Vastu Yaga were performed with due solemnity and according to Sastric procedure. The opening of the Temple which took place on the 24th February was solemnised with due rites and ceremonies and the feeding of devotees. On the following day took place a procession which was perhaps unprecedented in the history of Benares. Besides the elite of the city, the procession, which completed its route in the course of three hours, was accompanied by all the religious magnates of this Holy City—the Mahants and Mandaliwars of the various Maths and monastic Orders and hundreds of Sanyasins of various sects. These carrying their respective flags and symbols of office and either walking or mounted on cars of elephants marched in perfect order and solemn dignity both before and after a beautiful oil-painting of Sri Ramakrishna placed on the back of a gigantic elephant. The various Mandaliswars and orders of monks do not join in

procession even in old and long-established religious festivals like the Kumbha Mela. The universality of the Master's personality and message can alone account for this unique fact of all of them joining in honouring his memory. Equally wonderful was the spirit of harmony that prevailed on the occasion of the Samashti Bhandara (feast) next day, when the Naga monks of the three Akhadas—Nirvani, Niranjani and Juna—and the Paramahamsas, numbering on the whole 2,000, and 500 Brahmins all took meals together. Such a large gathering of Sadhus and unanimity of feeling on the occasion of a feast are never witnessed ordinarily.

The Religious Conference which began from the 1st of March and held five sittings, was largely attended and had representatives of various religions and sects. Prominent among those who took active part in it were Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya Mahamahopadhyaya Pramatha Nath Tarkabhusin, Principal A. B. Dhruba, Siva Prasad Gupta and the heads of the six prominent monastic Orders of India, who are generally known by the name Mandaliwar—Swamis Swarupananda, Bhagavatananda Giri, Jayendra Puri, Nrisingha Giri, Krishnananda Giri and Madhavendra Giri.

Principal Dhruba who was the President of the 1st day's sitting, observed in his presidential address : "Sri Ramakrishna's life was mainly a life of realisation while that of Vivekananda was a life of interpretation. Of the two glorious institutions on both the sides of the Bhagirathi, Dakshineswar is the place of spiritual realisation of Sri Ramakrishna and Belur Math of interpretation of great Swami Vivekananda. Harmonious combination of realisation and interpretation in life alone can make all happy and prosperous."

On the succeeding days each of the Mandaliwars presided and the noteworthy feature of their addresses was that all these orthodox heads of long-established Sannyasin orders accepted Sri Ramakrishna as the Incarnation and World-Teacher of the present age.

The Conference also gave free scope for the representatives of the various religions of the world to expound their faiths, and besides followers of the Hindu sects, speak-

ers representing Buddhism, Mohammedanism and Christianity took part in the function. Mutual amity and perfect good-will prevailed among the various religionists assembled there on the occasion.

MADRAS

The preliminary celebration of Sri Ramakrishna's Birth-Centenary at Madras was observed with Pooja, Bhajana, feeding of the poor and Harikatha Kalakshepam. In the evening there was a meeting under the presidency of Prof. S. Kuppuswami Sastrigal; when Mr. S. R. Ranganathan, the Librarian of the Madras University Library, delivered an address on "Sri Ramakrishna and Play of Intuition." The lecturer pointed out that the lives of saints like Sri Ramakrishna are beyond the scope of scientific method; for science concerns only with factual knowledge, beyond which is a fringe representing the controversial part of science, and outside that fringe is the Great Unknown. As the lives of persons like Sri Ramakrishna belong to that Unknown, the method of understanding them is intuition. Intuition is an extra-conscious process, and the only way of understanding it is through authentic lives of saints like Sri Ramakrishna, and it is fortunate that the story of his inner life has been preserved for us in detail by men who had opportunity of moving with him intimately. There are three schools of thought regarding the validity of intuition

as a source of knowledge—the agnostics who do not believe in it, the Neo-Platonists who recognise it alone as the right source of knowledge and the school of compromise which accepts it as a possible source of knowledge. These discussions, the lecturer opined, can be set at rest only by coming into contact with realised souls like Sri Ramakrishna. He also pointed out that Sri Ramakrishna's individualistic method of instruction is coming into the forefront in the modern educational theory.

AT OTHER PLACES

Besides the celebrations held in these big cities we have hitherto come across reports of celebrations in several places, some of these celebrations being organised by the local centres of the Ramakrishna Mission and the others by admirers and followers of Sri Ramakrishna. We can only give the following list of such places in these columns : Trichur, Trivandrum, Calicut, Coimbatore, Conjeevaram, Nandyal, Pondicherry, Rajahmundry, Salem, Tellicherry, Trichinopoly, Villupuram, Ootacamund, Ellore, Madanapalle, Vellore, Hyderabad, Ponnur, Kandukur, Shiyali, Chinglepet, Coonada.

The list given above include only places in this Presidency. In succeeding issues we shall give information about celebrations in other parts of this Presidency as well as the rest of India.

